



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

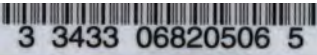
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

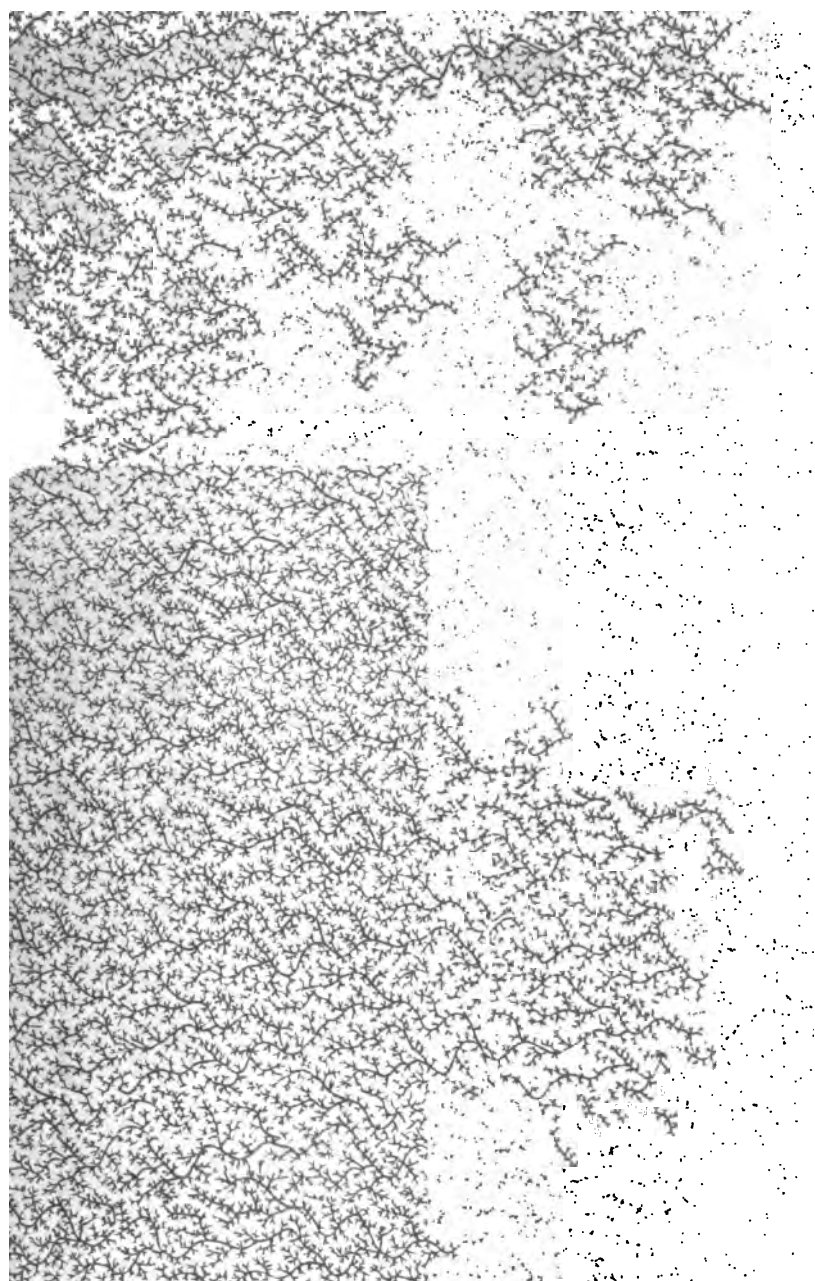
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

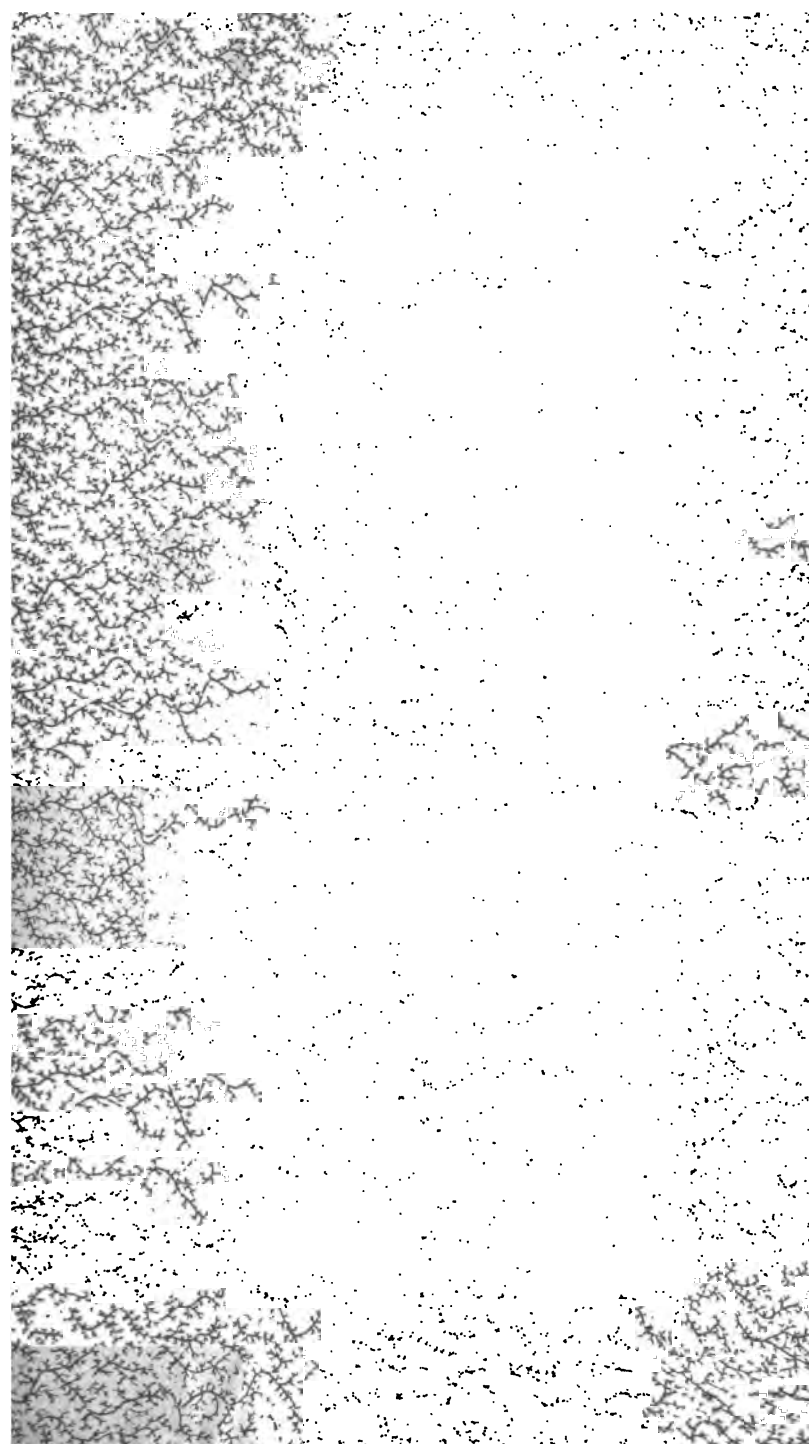
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



3 3433 06820506 5





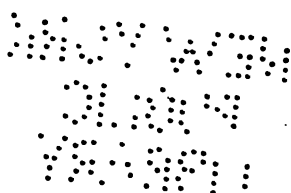


CONTENTS

OF THE

FOURTH VOLUME.

	PAGE
A Course of Lectures on the Figurative Language of the Holy Scripture, and the Interpretation of it from the Scripture itself	1
A Discourse on the Use and Intention of some remarkable Passages of the Scripture, not commonly understood	269
Four Lectures on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews; shewing the Harmony between the Mysteries, Doctrines, and Morality of the Old and New Testament	303
An Essay on the Church	382
A Short View of the present State of the Argument between the Church of England and the Dissenters .	473
Postscript	508



A
COURSE OF LECTURES
ON THE FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE OF THE
HOLY SCRIPTURE,

AND THE

Interpretation of it from the Scripture itself.

DELIVERED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF
NAYLAND IN SUFFOLK, IN THE YEAR 1786.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

FOUR LECTURES ON THE RELATION BETWEEN THE
OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS,

AS IT IS SET FORTH IN

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

天
地
人
三
才
一
理
也

TO THE MOST REVEREND HIS GRACE
JOHN MOORE, D. D.

LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,
PRIMATE AND METROPOLITAN OF ALL ENGLAND;

THIS VOLUME OF

LECTURES

INTENDED TO PROMOTE A MORE ACCURATE AND
INTERESTING KNOWLEDGE OF THE DIVINE

LANGUAGE AND DOCTRINE OF THE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS,

IS MOST HUMBLY RECOMMENDED.

AND INSCRIBED, BY

HIS GRACE'S

MOST OBLIGED,

MOST FAITHFUL AND OBEDIENT

HUMBLE SERVANT,

WILLIAM JONES.

THE
THEOLOGICAL,
PHILOSOPHICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS
WORKS
OF THE
REV. WILLIAM JONES, M.A. F.R.S.

IN TWELVE VOLUMES.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,
A SHORT ACCOUNT
OF HIS
LIFE AND WRITINGS,



VOL. IV.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR P. AND C. RIVINGTON, NO. 62, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-
YARD; J. ROSSON, NEW BOND-STREET; AND
J. NATCHARD, FICCADILLY.

1801.

without seeing, and ears without hearing. The bible was open before them; but their attention or their affection (one of the two it must have been) did not penetrate beyond the surface. And as our Saviour preached to them in the same way as Moses and the prophets had written (of which we shall see more hereafter), they were as much at a loss for the meaning of his discourses, as for the true sense of the law and the prophets. The same defect may be in us at this day, and certainly is in many, although we have the scripture in our mother tongue; a blessing which was denied to us so long as we were under the authority of the Church of Rome. If a man hears the bible all his life with a Jewish mind, he will know no more of it at last than the Jews do. The son of Adam will be left as ignorant as the son of Abraham, unless his heart and understanding are opened to admit the principles of the Christian Revelation. It is vain to argue about the superstructure, so long as the foundation is disputed, either through ignorance or disaffection.

This obscurity then in the word of God doth not arise from the language or the grammar; for so far the bible, like other books, is the subject of critical industry: and much useful labour hath been employed by learned and pious men
in

In clearing the letter of the scripture from the ambiguities to which all language is subject. The difficulties under which the Jews laboured were not grammatical difficulties: and whatever these may be in the original, they are removed for all common readers by the translation of the bible into their mother tongue. The great difficulties of the scripture arise totally from other causes and principles; namely, from the *matter* of which it treats, and the various *forms* under which that matter is delivered.

Let us consider first, how the case stands with respect to the *matter* of the scripture; and then secondly, with respect to the form or *manner* in which that matter is represented.

The bible treats of a dispensation of God, which began before this world, and will not be finished till the world is at an end, and the eternal kingdom of God is established. It informs us of the institution of religion in paradise, with the original dependence of man upon his maker: of a primitive state of man under a former covenant, which is now forfeited: of his temptation and fall: of the causes of death, and the promise of redemption. It founds a ritual on the remission of sin by the shedding of blood, and the benefits of intercession; which the heathens also acknowledged in the traditionary rites of their

their priesthood. It relates the dispersion of the Gentile nations, and the separation of the Hebrews. It foretells the manifestation of a Saviour in the flesh ; the rejection of the Jews ; the calling and conversion of the heathens ; the establishment of the Christian Church, with its preservation against the powers of the world, and the gates of hell. It treats of a spiritual life, and renewed affections in its members ; that they must even be born again in a spiritual manner, and return to a state of childish simplicity in their understandings ; it assures us of the resurrection of the body after death ; of the future judgment of the world by the man Jesus Christ ; of the glorification of the faithful, and the condemnation of the wicked. It opens to us an invisible world of spirits, some of whom are in alliance with God, and others in rebellion against him ; assuring us withal, that every man will have his final portion with the one party or the other.

None of these things are known to us by nature ; and it is not pretended that they are ; for if man draws a scheme of religion for himself, not one of all these articles finds a place in it. Therefore as the nature of man doth not know any of these things till God reveals them, it must of course be under two very great difficulties ;

culties; first, of understanding or comprehending; and secondly, of admitting or receiving them.

From the difficulty we are under of comprehending such things as are above natural reason, the manner of the scripture is as extraordinary as its matter: and it must be so from the necessity of the case. Of all the objects of sense we have ideas, and our minds and memories are stored with them. But of invisible things we have no ideas till they are pointed out to us by revelation: and as we cannot know them immediately, such as they are in themselves, after the manner in which we know sensible objects, they must be communicated to us by the mediation of such things as we already comprehend. For this reason, the scripture is found to have a language of its own, which doth not consist of words, but of signs or figures taken from visible things. It could not otherwise treat of God, who is a spirit, and of the spirit of man, and of a spiritual world; which no words can describe. Words are the arbitrary signs of natural things; but the language of revelation goes a step farther, and uses some things as the signs of other things; in consequence of which, the world which we now see becomes a sort of commentary

tary on the mind of God, and explains the world in which we believe.

It being then the professed design of the scripture to teach us such things as we neither see nor know of ourselves, its stile and manner must be such as are no where else to be found. It must abound with figurative expressions ; it cannot proceed without them : and if we descend to an actual examination of particulars, we find it assisting and leading our faculties forward ; by an application of all visible objects to a figurative use ; from the glorious orb which shines in the firmament, to a grain of seed which is buried in the earth. In this sort of language did our blessed Saviour instruct his hearers ; always referring them to such objects as were familiar to their senses, that they might see the propriety and feel the force of his doctrine. This method he observed, not in compliance with any customary figures of speech peculiar to the Eastern people, but consulting the exigence of human nature, which is every where the same. He spake a sort of language which was to be carried out into all lands ; and which we of the western world are obliged to follow in our preaching of the gospel, because we cannot otherwise preach it so as to be understood by
our

our hearers. Here I find it necessary to confirm what I have advanced by some examples.

As we have but imperfect notions of the relations and differences between *life* and *death*, our Saviour, when he was about to raise a maid to life, said to those who were present, *the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth*. He did not say, she is dead, and I will raise her to life ; but she is asleep ; whence it was to be inferred that she would awake. They who were not skilled in the divine language of signs and figures, laughed him to scorn ; as if he had spoken in ignorance what was expressed with consummate truth and wisdom : for the substitution of sleep for death, when we have it upon such great authority, has the force and value of an whole sermon in a single word : it is a seed from whence a tree of life may be unfolded.

Upon another like occasion our Saviour expressed himself in the same manner to his disciples ; *our friend Lazarus sleepeth* ; and when they did not understand the force of his words, he said plainly, *Lazarus is dead*. When he spake of the deadness of the mind, a state, which, however real, must always be invisible, because the mind itself is so ; he expressed it under the same term with the death of the body ; *let the dead bury their dead* : of which
expression

expression no sense can be made by those who are not aware, that the scripture speaks to us by things instead of words. Admit this principle, and then all is clear and consistent. It is as if Christ had said, "let those who are dead in their spirits (with respect to the *new life* of the gospel), employ themselves in burying those who are dead in body; for they are fit for nothing else: but by following me and preaching the gospel, thou shalt raise men from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness."

In the writings of the prophets, the spiritual blessings of the gospel are so constantly described under some allusion to nature, that their expressions are not true till they are figuratively interpreted. Let us take an example from the prophet Isaiah: *Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made strait, and the rough places plain.* Who ever heard that this was literally fulfilled? In what part of the world were all the mountains levelled; the vallies filled up; the crooked and rough places made strait and plain? But in the figurative sense, all these things were to be brought to pass in the minds of men at the publication of the gospel, when *all flesh should see the salvation*

of God *. Then should the high and mighty of this world be confounded and brought low ; the humble should be exalted, the meek encouraged, the crooked ways of men rectified, their wild and rugged tempers softened and civilized.

The bible has farther difficulties arising from another principle. For it pleased God, for wise ends, to exercise the faith and devotion of his people with a system of forms and ceremonies, which had no value but from their signification. I mention no particulars here, because they will occur to us abundantly hereafter ; but the fact is undoubted from that general assertion of St. Paul, that *the law had a shadow of good things to come* † : and again, that the instituted meats and drinks, the holy days, new moons and sabbaths, of the law, are *a shadow of things to come*, having their substance in the doctrines and mysteries of christianity ; or, as the apostle speaks, *whose body is of Christ* ‡. And therefore in the gospel things are still described to us in the terms of the law ; the substance itself taking the language of the shadow, that the design of both may be understood : as where the apostle saith, *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us*, &c. from the application of which term
to

* Luke iii. 6.

† Heb x. 1.

‡ Col. ii. 17.

to the person of Christ, we are taught under this one word of the *passover*, that he is to us a *lamb* in meekness and innocence of manners; pure and *spotless* from every stain of sin; *slain* (and that without the *breaking of his bones*) for the *redemption* of his people from the wrath of the destroyer; and *feeding* with his body those who put away all *leaven* from their hearts.

But now, beside this first difficulty, which we are under, of *comprehending* the *matter* of the scripture from the *peculiar manner* in which it is delivered, we are under a second difficulty as to the *receiving* of it; without which our understanding of it will be very imperfect, if any at all. For the force of men's minds is generally found to be according to their affections; for which reason the disaffection of the Jew is attended with a very conspicuous weakness of the understanding. We may lay it down as a certain truth, confirmed by the experience of all men, that when any object is admitted into the mind, it must find a faculty there which corresponds with its own peculiar nature. When there is no appetite, the sweetest meat is of no value, and even the sight and savour of it may be disagreeable. When there is neither ear nor skill in music, heavenly sounds give no delight; and with the blind the beams of the sun give
no

no beauty to the richest prospect. It is thus in every other case of the kind. The mathematician and logician apply to the intuitive faculty of reason; the poet to the imagination or mirror of the mind; the orator to the sensibility of the affections; the musician to the musical ear. The mathematician demonstrates nothing but to patient and attentive reason; to the imagination which is dull the poet is a trifler; on the hard and unfeeling heart the orator makes no impression; and the sweetest music is referred to the class of noises, where there is no sense of harmony. Thus when God speaks of things which are above nature, his meaning must be received by a faculty which is not the gift of nature, but superadded to nature by the gift of God himself. For spiritual truth there must be a spiritual sense; and the scripture calls this sense by the name of *faith*: which word sometimes signifies the act of believing; sometimes the matter which is believed; but in many passages it is used for that sense or capacity in the intellect, by which the invisible things of the spirit of God are admitted and approved.

It is a doctrine which may occasion some mortification to human pride, and it seldom fails to do so; but no doctrine of the gospel of Jesus Christ is more decided than this, that *all men*

have not faith; that it is the *gift of God* wherever it is found; and that the *natural man*, or man with no powers but those of our common nature, *receiveth not the things of the spirit of God*: so far from it, that they seem foolish, extravagant, and incredible, and are rejected with mockery and contempt by men who can write a pleasant style, and who seem to be in other respects (within the sphere of their affections) very sensible and ingenious persons. On what other ground but that of the scriptural distinction between faith and natural reason, is it possible to account for a fact which so frequently occurred at the first publication of the gospel; when the same speech, the same reasoning, yea and the same miracle, had a totally different effect on the minds of different hearers, all present on the same occasion? When Peter and John healed the lame man at the gate of the temple, and all the people were spectators of the fact, the apostles addressed themselves in a powerful discourse to those who were present; the lame man still cleaving to them, and standing by them as a witness: and thus they made some thousands of converts to the word of the gospel. But behold, the Sadducees were *grieved* at the doctrine of the resurrection, though preached with all the force of truth from their own scriptures,

tures, and attended with the credential of an indisputable miracle ; which only vexed and distressed them the more. At Athens, the philosophers of the place, proud of their Grecian talent for oratory and disputation, considered the matter of Paul's preaching merely as a new thing, which gave them an opportunity of questioning and wrangling. Some called him a babbler ; some said they would hear him again ; some mocked at the resurrection of the dead ; while Dionysius, one of their senators, Damaris, and some others, clave unto them and *believed* : in other words, they received the gospel with that faculty of the spirit, which alone is susceptible of it. Till there is in man the sense which receiveth these things, the book which treats of them will not be understood.— If they are rejected, we must conclude this sense to be wanting : and when that is the case, the evidence of a miracle will not force its way through the hardness of the human heart. Some speculative writers have treated of credibility and probability, and the nature, and force, and degrees, of evidence, as if we had rules for weighing all truth to a single grain with mechanical certainty : whereas in fact, man, with all his boasted balancings of reason, can resist a proof that would confound a devil. Compare

the following examples : The Jews said, “ as
 “ for this fellow we know not whence he is.”
 The devils said, “ I know thee who thou art,
 “ the holy one of God.” The Jews said, that
 Christ cast out devils through Belzebub their
 prince : but the devils never said so themselves.
 The sun of the noon-day shines without effect
 upon the blind, because the proper sense is
 wanting : so saith the Evangelist, *the light
 shineth in darkness, and the darkness compre-
 hendeth it not.* Vicious inclinations and habits
 of sin, which render truth disagreeable, are sure
 to have the effect of weakening and perverting
 the judgment : *this is the condemnation, that
 light is come into the world, and men loved dark-
 ness rather than light, because their deeds were
 evil.* The understanding of truth implies a love
 of truth ; and the understanding will be defi-
 cient so long as that love is wanting. None are
 so blind as they who are so by choice ; that is
 to say, the ignorant are never found to be so
 absurd as the disaffected. The word of God
 is in itself all-sufficient for the illumination of
 the mind ; it is a seed, quick and vigorous
 with the principles of life ; but, like other seeds,
 it must find something congenial with itself
 in the soil into which it falls. The word spoken
 did not profit the Jews, because it was not
mixed

mixed with faith in them that heard it; there was nothing in the soil to give it nourishment and growth.

The distinction which the scripture hath made between natural and spiritual men; that is, between men that have faith and men that have none, is agreeable to what hath been observed from the beginning of the world; that there have been two classes of people, all sprung from the same original, but totally different in their views, principles, and manners. Before the flood, they were distinguished as the children of Cain, and the children of Seth; the latter of whom inherited the faith of Abel. After the flood we find them again under the denominations of Hebrews and Heathens. In the gospel they appear to us as the *children of this world*, and the *children of light*: the former cunning and active in their generation for the interests of this life, the other wise towards God and the things of eternity. These two run on together, like two parallel lines, through the history of this world: always near to one another, but never meeting. Whoever considers this fact, will not be at a loss for a reason, why the wisdom of God in the scripture is so differently accepted in the world.

Having thus endeavoured to shew that the

scripture must have its difficulties, and whence they arise ; we shall obtain some farther light, if we enquire what the scripture hath said concerning itself.

The great apostle thus distinguishes between the language of revelation, and the words of human wisdom. “ We speak the wisdom of “ God *in a mystery*, even the *hidden wisdom*— “ which none of the princes of this world knew ; “ for had they known it, they would not have “ crucified the Lord of glory.” By which he means, that the priests and rulers who stood up against the Lord, did so for want of understanding that sense of the scripture which is hidden under the signs and symbols of it, in a way totally different from the wisdom of this world, and which the *natural man** can neither see nor admit. The word *mystery*, in a vulgar acceptance, is applied to such things as are dark and unintelligible : but to *speak in a mystery*, as the phrase is used in the scripture, is to reveal some sacred and heavenly doctrine under some outward and visible sign of it : and thus the sacraments of the church being outward signs with an inward and spiritual meaning, are also to be understood as mysteries. This sense of the word *mystery* is ascertained by that passage

* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

passage in the revelation; *the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.* To signify a church holding forth the light of the gospel, by that domestic instrument of illumination which holds a candle; and to signify a ruler or teacher by a star which gives light from the firmament of heaven, is to speak under the form of a mystery; which is not necessarily unintelligible, because it is here explained. So in another place; *this is a great mystery*, saith the apostle, *but I speak concerning Christ and the church.* To teach us the union betwixt Christ and the church, for the bringing forth of sons to glory, under the similitude of Adam and Eve united in Paradise for the multiplying of mankind upon earth, is also to speak in a mystery. The sorceress in the Revelation *, who is called by the name of Babylon, hath the word MYSTERY inscribed with that name upon her forehead; because Babylon is there not literal, but figurative or mystical, to denote that abomination of *idolatry*, by the *sorceries* of which all nations were *deceived* †: she sitteth on a *scarlet-coloured beast*,

c 4

supported

* Chap. xvii.

† Chap. xii. 23.

supported by the imperial powers of this world, called, the *kings of the earth*: and the *wine* in her cup is the false doctrine with which she intoxicates the minds of men.

This *hidden wisdom* of the scripture is to be considered as treasure hid in the earth, for which men must search with that same zeal and labour with which they penetrate into a mine of gold: for when our Saviour commands us to *search the scriptures* for their testimony of himself, the language of the precept implies that kind of searching by which gold and silver are discovered under ground. He who doth not search the word of God in that manner, and with that spirit, for what is to be found underneath it, will never discover its true value. The same principle is inculcated with a like allusion, when the divine law is compared to honey and the honey-comb; an inward sense being therein hidden, as when the bee seals up its treasure in the cells of wax: and the one when taken out is as sweet to the understanding as the other is to the palate. It is also as the corn in the husk, which must be taken from thence by the labour of the ox on the threshing floor, (as the custom was of old) before it can support the life of man. As the disciples of Christ plucked the ears of corn, and rubbed them

them in their hands on the sabbath day, so should every christian preacher handle the word of God before it can give nourishment to their hearers. The labour of the ministry is certainly alluded to in that precept relating to the threshing floor, *thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn*: for the apostle seems to wonder how any could be so absurd as to suppose that God considered nothing but the benefit of the beast on this occasion; as if he had *care of oxen*, when he undoubtedly meant to assign the reward, and signify the work of his *ministers, who labour in the word and doctrine*. It is the work of the ministry to expound the word of God, as the labouring ox in the threshing floor treadeth out the grain from the chaff: and as the ox is not muzzled at such a time, but partakes freely of the fruits of his labour; so by parity of justice, they who preach the word have a right to live of it.

That there is both a plain and a figurative sense in the language of the scripture, particularly in the law, is clear from the Apostle's reasoning on another occasion. He gives a name to each of these, distinguishing them under the contrary terms of the *letter* and the *spirit*: which terms are not unfrequently applied in the language of civil life to the laws of the land, in which there

is a literal sense of the words, and a deeper sense of their general *intention*, called the spirit, which the letter cannot always reach.

The *letter* of the scripture is applied to the outward institutions and ceremonies of the law, as they stand in the words of the law without their interpretation: the *spirit* of them, or the *intention* of the law-giver, is the same with the doctrine of the new testament, called elsewhere *the good things to come*, of which the law had an image and shadow. In its washings and purifications we see the doctrine of *baptism*; that is, of regeneration by water and the spirit of God *. In its sacrifices we see the necessity and efficacy of Christ's death once for all. Had it not been necessary for man to be born of the spirit, and redeemed by the blood of Christ, the law would not have troubled the people with washings and sacrifices; for in that case they would have signified nothing, and consequently would have been superfluous and impertinent; whereas if we take them right, the services of the law are the gospel in figurative description, and the gospel is the law in spirit and signification. The passover of the law is a sign of Christ that was to come; and Christ when he is come is the sense and signification of the pass-over,

* Ezech. xxxvi. 25:

over. It is the duty of a christian minister not to disappoint the law or the gospel, but to do justice to the wisdom of God in both, and put these things together, for the edification of the people. "Our sufficiency (saith the apostle) is of God, who hath made us able ministers of the new testament, *not of the letter, but of the spirit*; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." The letter of the law, voided of its evangelical intention, leaves our bodies washed, but our souls unclean; it leaves us nothing but the blood of bulls and of goats, and consequently under guilt and forfeiture; whence the apostle hath truly affirmed, that in this capacity it is a *ministration of death*. In his reasonings with the Jews, he presses them with the unreasonableness and wickedness of resting in the literal observation of the law; telling them, that *by the letter and circumcision they transgressed the law*. But how could this be? did not the law ordain circumcision in the letter? it did undoubtedly: yet, however paradoxical it may appear, the literal observation of the law was a transgression of the law. From whence it is a necessary consequence, that the letter of the law was ordained only for the sake of its spirit or moral intention; which the Jew neglecting, while he trusted in the law as a form,

was in effect a transgressor of it ; and was condemned in his error by the Gentiles, who without being born under the letter of the law, had now attained to the spirit of it, and were better Jews than the Jews themselves : for, adds the apostle, *he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh ; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly ; and circumcision (as Moses himself had taught*) is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter.*

To enquire more particularly into the errors of the Jews and the causes of them, would be foreign to my design. The fact is plain, that they erred by a literal interpretation of their law ; and that by still adhering to the same, they are no nearer to the gospel now than they were seventeen hundred years ago. On the other hand, the apostles of Jesus Christ succeeded in their labours by being *ministers of the spirit* ; that is, by interpreting and reasoning according to an inward or figurative sense in the law, the prophets, and the psalms. All the fathers of the christian church followed their example ; particularly *Origen*, one of the most useful and powerful of primitive expositors. Then were the Jews confounded, the heathens converted,

the

* Deut. x. 16.

the word of God was efficacious, and the people were edified. The same way of teaching was observed in the middle ages, 'till the times of the reformation; and even then our best scholars still drew their divine oratory, particularly the learned and accomplished *Erasmus*, from the spiritual wisdom of the first ages. To revive and promote which, within my own little sphere, is the design of this and the following lectures: in all which I shall invariably follow the rule of making the scripture its own interpreter. And now I have opened the way by shewing in what respects and for what reasons the style of the scripture differs from that of other books, and that it is symbolical or figurative; I propose with God's leave to distinguish the figures of the scripture into their proper kinds, with examples and explanations in each kind, from the scripture itself.

LECTURE II.

ON THE FIGURES WHICH ARE FOUND IN THE
LANGUAGE OF THE SCRIPTURE, AND THE
SEVERAL KINDS OF THEM.

IT hath been shewn in the former Lecture, that as the scripture teaches spiritual things which cannot be taught in words, the wisdom of God hath made use of *things*, as signs and figures, to explain them. This is done for several reasons: first, because we cannot conceive things of a spiritual nature but by borrowing our notions of them from the things that are visible and familiar to our senses. Secondly, because the scripture can speak under this form to some men, and reveal many things to them, while the same words reveal nothing to others: like that pillar in the wilderness, which was a cloud of darkness to the Egyptians,

Egyptians, while it gave light to the Hebrews. Thirdly because an outward sign, such as those of the scripture are, becomes a pledge and an evidence of the thing signified ; as it doubtless is a wonderful confirmation of the gospel to see its mysteries exactly delineated so long before in the services of the law of Moses ; and much more to see them written in the characters of nature itself.

The things which the scripture uses as figures of other things are taken, 1. From the natural creation, or world of sensible objects. 2. From the institutions of the law. 3. From the persons of the prophets and holy men of old time. 4. From the history of the church. 5. From the actions of inspired men, which in many instances were not only miracles but *signs* of something beyond themselves, and conformable to the general plan of our salvation and redemption.

These are the materials of that figurative language in which the bible is written ; and of the several kinds of them, as here distinguished, I shall treat in their order, after I have given a general description of each.

1. When any object is taken from the visible creation, and applied as an illustration or sign of some spiritual truth, we call it a natural image.

image. The scripture calls them *similitudes*; as in that passage of the prophet Hosea—*I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes by the ministry of the prophets* *. A discourse made up of such is called *a parable*; a form of speech which our Saviour as a divine teacher thought most agreeable to the nature of his own preaching, and to the wants of his hearers. In which, however, he only did what the scripture had always done; he instructed the eyes of the understanding by placing some natural object before them; and as the visible world throughout is a pattern of the invisible, the figures of the sacred language built upon the images of nature, are as extensive as the world itself; so that it would be a vain undertaking to interpret all the figures which are reducible to this class.

2. Other figures are borrowed from the institutions of the ceremonial law, which are applied to the things of the gospel; and in this capacity the law is all figure. It is nothing considered in itself but a copy, *a shadow of good things to come*; and as a shadow, it had only the *form*, not the *substance*, (or *very image*, as the scripture calls it) of the things hoped for. Its elements were like those of the gospel in form; and

* Hosea xii. 10.

and therefore it was a *schoolmaster*, a teacher of such elements as prepared the mind for the reception of a spiritual dispensation, in which its shadows are now realized.

When our Saviour Jesus Christ is called a priest, a character is given to him, which cannot be understood till we go back to the law. There we see what a priest was, and what he did; and thence we learn the nature of our Saviour's priestly office. And as the whole law, in its ritual, consisted chiefly of priestly ministration; then, if the priest himself was figurative, his ministration was so likewise, and consequently the law was a pattern of the gospel.

3. The things relating to our Saviour's person, that is, to his birth, dignity, actions, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glorification, were foreshewn in the history of other great and remarkable persons, who, in the former ages of the church, were saviours upon occasion to their people, or examples of persecuted innocence, truth, and holiness, as he was to be. Such persons acting, or suffering, or triumphing, in this prophetic capacity, are called *types*. In the gospel they are called *figs*; and as a specimen for the present, we may take the two characters of *Jonah* and *Solomon*, as referred to in the 11th chapter of St.

Luke. Our Saviour* proposed Jonah to the Jews as *a sign* of his own future resurrection. This prophet went down into the mouth of a monster, as Christ was to be swallowed up like other men by the devouring jaws of death. As the prophet was detained there three days, Christ was so long to be confined to the sepulchre : and as Jonah was restored to the light at the divine command, so was Christ to rise again from the dead. Jonah was therefore a sign of his death and resurrection, such as no words could have delivered ; for a miraculous fact is best signified by a miraculous sign, which shews us that the thing was known and determined before it came to pass.

Such another sign was *Solomon* ; the fame of whose wisdom brought the Queen of Sheba from a heathen land to hear his words, and wonder at the greatness of his kingdom, and admire the order of his government : a sign that the Gentiles should listen to the word of him that was greater than Solomon, and be converted to the laws and œconomy of his spiritual kingdom ; while the Jews should despise his words and persecute his church : for which the example of the Queen of Sheba shall rise in judgment to condemn them.

4. Next

* Matth. xii. 40.

4. Next to the persons of the prophets is the history of the church at large ; concerning which the wisdom of God ordained, that things past should represent things to come, and serve as admonitions and signs to the people of God to the end of the world. Hence it comes to pass, that *no scripture is of any private interpretation* : its sense does not end in the persons of whom it speaks, but is of public application for the benefit of all places and of all times. The apostle speaking of some remarkable circumstances in the history of the church, assures us, that all those things *happened for ensamples, and are written for our admonition*. The deliverance of the Hebrews from Egypt was a pledge of our deliverance from this world of sin and bondage ; the service of which is perfect slavery, like that of the Hebrews under Pharaoh. Their temptations in the wilderness were like our trials in the passage through this mortal life. Their settlement in Canaan is an earnest to us, that if we commit ourselves in faith to the guidance of God, we shall in like manner obtain the promised inheritance ; and that without faith, we shall fall short of it.

Lastly, the actions of the prophets, and particularly of Christ himself, were figurative and prophetical ; they are therefore called *sights* as

well as miracles, because they carried an instructive signification, and pointed to something greater than themselves. The ways of divine wisdom are comprehensive, and answer many purposes at once. Our Saviour performed many mighty works, that for the sake of them men might believe him to be the Saviour of the world; but then they were withal of such a sort, as to admit of an application to the state of all Christians. We do not hear his voice, bidding us leave our companions in the ship and walk towards him upon the water: but all that will come to him must have their faith exercised, as that of Peter was, upon the waves of this troublesome world; they must undertake a hazardous passage, in which nothing but the power of Christ can support them; and if they cry to him, the same *right hand*, which saved the fearful Apostle, will be *stretched out to help them in all their dangers and necessities**; and the same goodness will be tender toward their infirmity in the hour of trial; reproving and yet pardoning the deficiencies of their faith.

All the miracles of Christ are after this pattern; they are signs of salvation in all ages, and admit of a general application to every member
of

* See the collect for the second Sunday after the Epiphany.

of the church, with whom the same miraculous power is still present, and acting for the highest purposes, though invisible to mortal sight.

To one or other of these five heads, the spiritual language of the scripture may be reduced, and from them the matter of it is borrowed: 1. From the images of nature, or visible things as representations of things invisible. 2. From the institutions of the law, as prefiguring the things of the gospel. 3. From the persons of the prophets, as types of the great prophet and Saviour that was to come. 4. From the history of the church of Israel as an ensample to the christian world. 5. From the miraculous acts of Moses, Christ, and others, as signs of the saving power of God towards the souls of men. All these things compose the figurative language of the bible; and that interpretation which opens and applies them to the objects of faith, is called a *spiritual* interpretation; as being agreeable to that *testimony* of Jesus, which is the *spirit* of prophecy.

I have been thus particular in the division of my subject, that by understanding at the beginning what my design is in the whole, it may always be known, as I proceed in it, what part I am upon.

Of this figurative language, the elements first

to be understood are those which are borrowed from the images of nature. And here a vast field is open to us, as wide as the world itself. If we consider it in due order, we must begin with the creation ; which is related in the book of Genesis, is a pattern of the new creation in Christ Jesus ; and is so applied by the apostle : *God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ**. Till this light shines in the heart of man, he is in the same state as the unformed world was, when *darkness lay upon the face of the deep* : and when the new creation takes place, he rises in baptism, as the new earth did from the waters, by the *spirit of God moving upon them*.

The lights of heaven in their order are all applied to give us conceptions of God's power, and shew us the glory of his kingdom. In the 84th Psalm, the *Lord* is said to be a *sun and a shield* ; a *sun* to give *light* to his people, and a *shield* to *protect* them from the power of darkness. Christ, in the language of the prophet is the *sun of righteousness*, who as the natural sun revives the grass, and renews the year, brings on the *acceptable year of the Lord*, and is the
great

* 2 Cor. iv. 6.

great restorer of all things in the kingdom of grace ; shining with the new light of *life and immortality* to those who once *sat in darkness and in the shadow of death*. And the church has warning to receive him under this glorious character: *Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee**. When he was manifested to the eyes of men, he called himself the *light of the world*, and promised to give the same light to those that follow him. In the absence of Christ as the personal light of the world, his place is supplied by the light of the scripture, which is still *a lamp to our feet, and a light unto our paths*. The word of prophecy is as *a light shining in a dark place*; and as we study by the light of a lamp, so we must give heed to this light, if we would see things to come.

The moon is used as an emblem of the church; which receives its light from Christ as the moon does from the sun: therefore the renovation of the moon signifies the renovation of the church; as a sign of which, the new moons were appointed to be observed as religious festivals under the law; and the apostle tells us they were *a shadow of things to come*; and the substance of that shadow is known from

the nature of the case, and the relation which the moon bears to the sun.

The angels or ruling ministers in the seven churches of Asia are signified in the book of Revelation by *seven stars* in the right hand of Christ : because his ministers hold forth the word of life, and their light shines before men in this mortal state, as the stars give light to the world in the night season ; of which light Christians in general partake, and are therefore called *children of light*.

This natural image of the light is applied to so many great purposes, that I must not dismiss it without making some farther use of it.

You see, our God is light ; our Redeemer is light ; our scripture is light ; our whole religion is light ; the ministers of it are light ; all christian people are children of the light, and have light within them. If so, what an obligation is laid upon us, not to walk as if we were in darkness, but to walk uprightly as in the day, shewing the people of this world, that we have a better rule to direct us than they have. If we who have the light walk as they do who are in darkness, the same darkness will assuredly come upon us ; we shall understand nothing, we shall care for nothing ; the light that is within us will be changed into darkness ; and then, vanity
and

and confusion will be the consequence, as to those who walk in the dark through a perplexed and dangerous path : and better would it be not to have had the light, than to be answerable for the guilt of having extinguished it and turned it into darkness. This is the moral doctrine to be derived from the usage of light in the sacred language.

Here I would also observe, that the figures of the scripture necessarily introduce something figurative into our worship ; of which I could give you several instances : but I shall confine myself to the matter now before us. The primitive Christians signified their relation to the true light, and expressed a religious regard to it, by the outward form of worshipping with their faces towards the east : because there the light first arises out of darkness, and there the day of true knowledge arose, like the sun, upon such as lay buried in ignorance. To this day our churches, especially that part which is appropriated to the most solemn act of christian worship, is placed toward the east ; our dead are buried with their faces to the east : and when we repeat the articles of our faith, we have a custom of turning ourselves to the east. The primitive Christians called their baptism their *illumination* ; to denote which, a light was
put

put into the hands of the person after baptism, and they were admitted to hear the lectures of the catechists in the church, under the name of *the illuminated*. The festival of Christ's baptism was celebrated in the month of January with the ceremony of a number of lighted torches. When the converts repeated the confession of their faith at baptism, they turned themselves to the east; and to the west when they renounced the powers of darkness. In the modern church of Rome this ceremony of worshipping to the east has been abused, and turned into an act of adoration to the altar; on account of which, some Christians who have heard of the abuse of this ceremony, without knowing the use of it, have rejected that as an act of superstition, which has an edifying sense, and was practised in the days of the apostles, before any superstition had infected the church. As such only I would recommend it to observation*.

In

* An excellent sermon, which ought never to be forgotten, and which I carried through the press, when I was an under graduate at Oxford, was published on *Christ the light of the world*, from a verse of the 19th Psalm, by my admired, beloved and lamented friend, the late Rev. *George Watson*, once a fellow of University College, to whose early instructions and example I have been indebted in most of the literary labours of my life. Many extraordinary men have I seen; but for taste in classical literature, and all works of genius;

In the element of air, which comes next in order to be considered, we have a figure of the Holy Spirit, which worketh imperceptibly as it listeth, while we cannot tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth. The operations of the divine Spirit, are like those of the air, necessary to life; the one to the natural life, the other to the spiritual: and as the air gives the breath of speech, so the Holy Ghost gives the utterance of *inspiration*: therefore he descended on the day of Pentecost under the outward sign of a rushing mighty wind from heaven; and in consequence of it, the apostles spake as the spirit gave them utterance; and their sound went out into all lands.

The element of water, which washes and purifies the body, is used to signify the inward cleansing of the soul from sin, by the washing of grace in baptism: and all the purifications by water under the law had the like meaning; as they are applied in those words of the prophet: *then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean, from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you: a*
new

for a deep knowledge of the inspired writings; for readiness of speech and sweetness of elocution; for devout affection towards God, for charitable goodness of heart, and elegance of manners, I never met with one that exceeded him.

new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you *. This new heart and new spirit, as the work of God's grace, was always signified by every act of religious purification; according to that of the Psalmist, *Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow—Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me* †.

Water is used in another capacity to quench the thirst; in which sense it is put for the doctrine of God's word, refreshing and invigorating the soul, as the water of the spring gives new life and strength to the thirsty. As the spring breaks forth from the secret treasures of the earth, the doctrines of salvation proceed from a source which we cannot see. In this sort of language did our Saviour speak of the grace of his own divine doctrine to the woman of Samaria: *if thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water* ‡; that is, the doctrine of salvation which he preached to the world, and

* Ezechiel xxxvi. 25.

† Psalm li.

‡ There is a peculiar propriety in the scripture term of *living water* for the water of a running spring; because it brings with it a new life and spirit, which it has derived from the subterraneous chymistry of nature; and it is always found to contain a large quantity of air.

and of which he used these remarkable words in the temple.—*He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water*; that is, the words of his mouth shall convey that doctrine which giveth life to the world: his preaching shall satisfy a multitude of souls, as the stream of a river is sufficient to the quenching of their thirst.

As the elements of the world, so the seasons of the year have their signification in scripture. The beauties of the spring and summer are selected by the prophet Isaiah, to describe the perfection and felicity of Messiah's kingdom at the appearance of the gospel: when righteousness should spring up among the barren Gentiles who had been fruitless and deserted as the earth when forsaken by the sun; *The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God**. The season of the harvest, which came in at the end of the Jewish year, is applied in a parable of our Saviour to the great in-gathering of the world, when the wheat shall be reaped, the tares shall be separated

* Isaiah xxxv. 1. 2.

rated for the fire, and the labourers employed in that great work shall be the ministring spirits of God, sent forth to gather his elect, and to finish his kingdom upon earth. *The Harvest of our Lord, is the end of the world*; and as surely as the course of the year brings us about to that season, so surely will the dispensation of God, now on its progress, bring us to a sight of that other harvest: and it behoves us to consider well what part we are likely to bear on that occasion.

From the seasons let us turn our eyes to the animal creation; at the head of which is man, an epitome of all the other works of God.

The œconomy and disposition of the human body is used as a figure of that spiritual society, or corporate body, which we call the Church; and God is said to have disposed the offices of the one in conformity to the order observable in the other. The head is Christ; the eyes appointed to see for the rest of the body, are the prophets and teachers, antiently called *seers*. The hands that minister are the charitable and merciful, who delight in supplying the wants of their fellow members. The feet are the inferior attendants, whose duty it is to know their place, and be subservient in their proper callings. Each hath his proper gifts and his

proper station; and as there is no respect of persons with God, no man should pay any undue respect to himself; but all should unite with humility and piety in fulfilling the great purpose of God, who hath joined them together in one communion. As there is no division in the natural body, but all the limbs and members have care for one another, and one life animates them all; so it should be in the church, where there is *one body and one spirit*. In this form hath the apostle argued against the divisions and jealousies then prevailing in the church of Corinth *: and if his argument was considered as it merits, and in that spirit of fervent zeal and love with which it was written, there would be no such thing as schism in the church, or faction in the state.

The bodily senses of men are used to denote the faculties of the mind: for the soul has its senses; but as we cannot see their operations, it is necessary to speak of them in such terms as are taken from the visible powers of the body. He that does not understand the language of the scripture, is said to have *no ears*; he that does not see spiritual things, to have *no eyes*; he that cannot make confession of his faith with his tongue, and has no delight in the praises of God,

is

* See 1 Cor. xii.

is *dumb*. In short, every unregenerate man, who is without the knowledge of God, and has nothing but what nature and his own vanity give him, is in the nature and condition of a beggar, *poor and blind and naked**; and he who is not yet alive in spirit, is even taken for dead and buried, and is called upon to *arise from the dead*, and *awake unto righteousness*.

The soul being invisible, its distempers are so; therefore the sacred language describes them by the distempers of the body. A nation or city, in a state of sin and impenitence, are represented to themselves as a body full of diseases and sores. In this style the spirit speaks by the prophet Isaiah of Judah and Jerusalem; *the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head, from the lowest of the people up to their princes and rulers, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores*. In the same way, the works of the devil in stripping and abusing the nature of man by the fatal introduction of sin, are represented as wounds given by a thief, who meets him on the road, and leaves him naked and half-dead upon the earth. This is the intention of that parable, which describes the fall and salvation of

* Rev. iii. 17.

of man, as the relieving and curing of a wounded traveller.

The support of man's spiritual life is like the support of his natural; and the sacrament of the Lord's supper, (which some of late have taken great pains to undervalue and misinterpret) is built upon this similitude.

Man is sent into the world to earn his bread by his labour, and some think he is sent for nothing else; but this is only a shadow of his proper errand, which is, to *work out his own salvation with fear and trembling*: and for this work he has need of sustenance, as much as for the daily labours of his life. Therefore God has provided a supply of a spiritual kind, signified outwardly by the figures of bread and wine, the commemorative sacrifice of the death of Christ, and the instituted means of conveying the benefits of it to the souls of men. Beasts killed in sacrifice were fed upon by the offerers; and Christ's death being a sacrifice, he is fed upon in faith by those who thus commemorate his death; and the consequence is the *strengthening and refreshing of their souls*: if not, this absurdity should follow from the parallel, that eating the flesh of sacrifices was a meer ceremony which contributed nothing to the nourishment of the body. What can be more express

than the doctrine of our Saviour himself upon this subject? *My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed—He that eateth me, even he shall live by me*; that is, shall live with a new and divine life, as really as his body lives and is nourished by his daily bread. Unless these words do signify, that a real principle of life and strength is derived to us from the body of Christ, whereof we partake, there can be no certainty in language, and every doctrine of the scripture may be thrown into doubt and obscurity. Without faith, as it hath already been argued in the proper place, the language of the scripture never was nor ever will be admitted in its true sense; but with it, it is clear enough to every reader.

This first head of my subject is so copious, that I must conclude here, and defer what remains to the next Lecture.

LECTURE III.

ON THE FIGURES OF THE SCRIPTURE WHICH
ARE TAKEN FROM NATURE.

(A CONTINUATION OF THE FORMER.)

THE former Lecture would not allow me room to explain the figures which the scripture hath borrowed from the natural world and the objects of common life ; though I determined to select such of them only as might be thought most important and instructive : and even now, the subject is so copious, that I must leave many which I should be glad to treat of.

From the consideration of the heavens, the elements and the seasons, we descended to man, whose bodily life is a pattern and shadow of his spiritual life, and is applied to illustrate it in many instances.

From his natural, we must now go forward to his social, civil, or political life, as a citizen, subject, and member of society ; together with his worldly condition, relations, offices, and occupations.

The spiritual state, or kingdom of heaven, is represented to us under the emblem of an earthly kingdom, in which God is the supreme governor and judge, ruling all his creatures with infinite power, and according to the laws of justice, goodness, and mercy.

The church is a spiritual kingdom under Christ its head ; and its ministers are ambassadors, commissioned to treat with the world, and propose terms of reconciliation from God, with whom they are by nature at enmity. St. Paul, having occasion to speak of his commission under Jesus Christ, saith, *for whom I am an ambassador in bonds*. This was a strange case ; and he mentions it as such ; because the persons of ambassadors were accounted sacred, and it was against the law of nations to do any violence to them : but the world, while it keeps good faith with itself, keeps none with God. Our blessed Saviour, as Pilate truly entitled him upon the Cross, was the *King of the Jews*, though not after the form and authority of worldly kingdoms ; and as such had a claim to
the

the allegiance of his subjects. Their rebellious treatment of him and his ambassadors is represented in the parable of the marriage of the king's son*; whose invitation they rejected; and abused his servants. In consequence of this his armies were sent out, to do execution upon them as murderers, and burn up their city: all of which was fulfilled upon the apostate Jews, and their city Jerusalem: and having rejected him, they are to this day without a king, without laws, without a country.

There is another parable of the same kind, which admits of a more general application, and comes home to ourselves. Christ ascending into heaven, there to receive all power, and return invested with it to the general judgment, is signified under the person of *a nobleman who went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom and to return—But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, we will not have this man to reign over us*†. Thus insolently and ungratefully doth a wicked world treat the authority of Christ in his absence: but he shall *return*; and then the authority they will not admit for their good, will be turned to their destruction—*Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring*

E 3

hither

* Matth. xxii.

† Luke xix. 12.

hither and slay them before me. Not all the powers upon earth can hinder the execution of this command—*bring them hither*—wherever these offenders shall then be, they will all be found ; even the grave shall not hide them, the dust shall not cover them ; but the ministers of vengeance will drag them forth, and present them before that king whom they hated and affronted. Some there are, who send their message after him in terms of open treason and defiance ; while others explain away the sense and authority of his kingdom with subtilities of logic and a mask of piety. But let them speak or reason as they please, the proudest of them all are under the power of Jesus Christ : those who do not allow of his spiritual authority in his kingdom the church, are still within the reach of his justice. Happiest are they, in whose hearts the kingdom of God is established according to those words which were spoken of it—*the kingdom of God is within you* ; and who can pray daily, as they are commanded, that his *kingdom may come* ; that it may prevail over our affections, and direct all our doings, till at length it shall be manifested over all, and the king himself shall appear in his glory.

The judgment passed by the magistrate in
this

this world against crimes is founded on the law of God, and is an administration of *his* justice for the time being ; an earnest of that more equal and perfect administration which is to come. Every tribunal before which criminals are summoned is a prelude to the day of doom, when *the judgment shall sit, and the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, and the dead shall be judged out of those things that are written.* This may seem distant to us now, in our blind way of considering things ; but in the language of the scripture it is otherwise : *behold, saith St. James, the judge standeth before the door, ready to enter, and to bring every secret work, and every neglected and perverted cause into judgment.*

Other figures of the scripture are taken from the state in which mankind are engaged under the dangers of *war.* As men are troubled with violence and treachery from one another ; so is there another warfare more hazardous, to which all Christians are enlisted under the *captain of their salvation,* against enemies whom no man can see ; active, subtle, vigilant, malignant spirits ; for, *we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers.* As men prepare for an earthly war, so are we to prepare ourselves that we may *stand in the*

evil day : we are to put on the *whole armour of God*, as the apostle hath described it ; we are to take the *shield of faith*, the *sword of God's word*, the *helmet of salvation* ; and to pray that we may be inspired with fortitude, and assisted in the use of them. We have treachery as well as force to guard against. There are deceitful lusts which assume the mask of pleasure, while they are *warring against the soul*, as it were by sap, to undermine and destroy it.

No man can use a sword with skill, but he who hath been instructed in the art of defence, and hath practised it long : so can no man handle the word of God aright, that *sword of the spirit*, but he that has studied it diligently. With unskilful handling by the ignorant, or the ill-disposed, it may wound ourselves, and our friends, like a sword in the hands of a child or a madman.

Amongst the *occupations* of men, the chief is that of husbandry ; and it will afford us much instruction. As the field is the subject of man's labour, so man himself is a field under the cultivation of God : *ye are God's husbandry*, saith the apostle. All the particulars in the course of husbandry are fulfilled in our hearts. For as the ground is broken and
cleared,

cleared, so is the heart to be prepared by repentance : whence the prophet Hosea thus calls upon the people ; *break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord.* In the parable of the sower, *the seed is the word of God* ; quick and powerful with the principles of life ; and the different kinds of soil denote the various dispositions with which men receive the word of God ; some *few into an honest and good heart* ; many more into hearts open as the common high-way to the lusts of the world and the visits of satan ; and as such people understand nothing spiritual, they immediately lose what they receive. Some, whose minds are shallow, cannot retain it, as not having depth enough for the word to be rooted, so as to withstand trials and temptations, signified by the scorching heat of the sun upon a stony soil. Some are so full of care and business, that the word can no more thrive, than seed among thorns and thistles.

I would propose this parable of the sower as a specimen of the excellence of that figurative mode of instruction so constantly pursued throughout the scripture. See how much doctrine, enough to fill a volume, is here comprehended in how few words ; in a form striking

ing to the imagination, and plain to every capacity!

Another sort of husbandry, not so familiar to us in this climate, is the cultivation of the vineyard. In countries nearer to the sun, vines are cultivated in the fields, and employ many hands to plant and dress them, and gather their fruits. In the 5th chapter of Isaiah there is a mystical song, which considers the church of Israel as the vineyard of God, planted in a fruitful situation on the holy hill of Sion, cleared, fenced and guarded, furnished with every thing that could render it complete and keep it in its perfection. Instead of good fruit it produced wild grapes, as bad as if it had been left without cultivation. For this, its hedge was to have been taken away, and it was to be eaten up; that is, the heathens round about it were to be let in upon it to devour it, and it was to be trodden down: no rain was to fall upon it; the blessing of divine grace from heaven was to be withheld; and thorns and briars, all sorts of wicked people, under the figure of every worthless, troublesome and accursed plant were to prevail in it.

In the 80th psalm, the spoiling of the church is lamented under the same image. It is described

scribed as *a vine brought out of Egypt* by the hand of God, to be rooted in Canaan ; from whence the heathens were cast out to *make room for it*, as the ground is cleared of stones and rubbish for a new plantation. But for its unfruitfulness, the boar out of the wood laid it waste, and the wild beast of the field devoured it. Such ever was and ever will be the fate of the church : when it becomes degenerate, and unworthy of the hand that planted it, the world is let in upon it ; who are as eager to plunder, lay it waste, and trample it down, as the swine to root up the ground and destroy a plantation.

In the new testament, the members of the church are considered more particularly as branches of Christ : *I am the true vine*, says he, *and my father is the husbandman* : as the branches of the vine are dressed, so are the members of Christ under the discipline of God : correction is as necessary to them as the pruning knife to the vine ; and as the branches bear no fruit but as they belong to the tree, so can no member of the church bring forth any fruit but by abiding in Christ ; for *without him we can do nothing*. The unprofitable branch, that bears no fruit, is taken away from the tree, to be burned ; and the fruitless Christian must

expect to be cast forth in like manner, and then gathered up for the fire.

The offices of men are applied to the same purpose as their occupations. God is pleased to take upon himself the office of a *shepherd*, and his *people* are related to him as a *flock*. Two of the psalms are composed upon this plan ; expressing the reliance of believers on the pastoral care of God, and their joy and thankfulness to him for admitting them to such an honourable relation : *The Lord is my shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing : he shall feed me in a green pasture, and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort.* Such is the language of the 23d psalm. The 100th psalm is an invitation to a solemn act of thanksgiving, with songs and instruments of music in the temple. The people of all nations being admitted into the flock of Israel as *the sheep* of God's *pasture*, ought to assemble within the fold of his church, for the public celebration of his truth and mercy. The obligation is particular and special upon Christians, since our Lord appeared personally to men in this character ; verifying that prediction of the prophet ; *he shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom.* To every act of care and kindness
proper

proper to a shepherd did he condescend: he took *the little children up in his arms, and blessed them*; he went about seeking the *lost sheep of the house of Israel*; he collected together and ordered the fold of his church; he has appointed other shepherds under him to take the charge of his flock, and is with them as *the chief shepherd* to the end of the world, when he shall still appear and act in the same character, separating the sheep from the goats in the day of judgment.

All the natural relations subsisting amongst mankind are applied to illustrate their spiritual interests. God is our heavenly Father, *of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named*: the Church is the daughter of God; the spouse of Christ, and the *mother of us all*. Christ is *the first-born*, and all christians are brethren in him; constituting together what is called the *household of faith*, as distinguished from the world of unbelievers. The Jew and Gentile are two brethren, the sons of their father; the Jew the elder, the Gentile the younger, whose apostacy and repentance are both described in the history of the prodigal son.

The union betwixt Christ and the Church is considered as a marriage, signified and fore-shewn by the first sacred union of Adam and
Eve

Eve in paradise. The followers and friends of Christ are now waiting in expectation of being called forth to meet this bridegroom, and join in the glorious procession that shall ascend, under the conduct of a train of angels, *to meet the Lord in the air*, when he shall return from the wedding : with which expectation they are to keep their *loins girded up*, and their *lights burning*. Woe be unto the foolish, whose lamps shall be gone out when the cry shall be raised at midnight, *behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him*.

As the author of our faith, Christ is our *master* or teacher ; and that in so strict a sense, that we are to call no other by that name in comparison of him ; much less are we to receive any other form of doctrine, from those who assume a right of teaching on the authority of any other person, or by any other rule, which the fashion of the times or the prejudices of education may have established amongst us.

This relation betwixt the master and the scholar must suggest to every Christian the indispensable duty of knowing the scriptures, and following the precepts of the gospel. For, let us ask ourselves : are we the scholars of Jesus Christ, and are we ignorant of his doctrine ? Do we pay no regard to his discipline, and the
rules

rules he has given for the conduct of life? And shall we not in such a case be disowned and expelled from his society? If we know nothing of him, he will know nothing of us, and will signify the same to us upon an awful occasion—*Depart from me, I know you not.*

Having thus far shewn how the nature, state, works, offices, and relations of mankind are applied, and how the scripture reasons from them, as from so many parallel cases; I shall now consider what use is made of the inferior part of the animal creation. And here you are to recollect, that beasts differ from one another as men do, the sober from the sottish, the gentle from the ravenous, the trusty from the thievish, the peaceable and obedient from the blood-thirsty and rebellious: and as the scripture expresses all things by similitudes, the properties and qualities of beasts are examples of virtues and vices amongst men. This moral difference was the ground of the distinction of beasts under the law of Moses into clean and unclean. The people of God were to eat of no unclean creature; they were to converse with no unclean man; and so the first effect of this law was of a civil nature, to keep the Jews separate from the conversation of other nations, that they might not learn their works. They could

could not eat with them, and consequently could not keep company with them ; and this law has the same effect to this day with the modern Jews. The second intention of it was of a moral or spiritual kind ; to suggest a figurative lesson of purity, obedience, and patience, from the various instincts of animals.

Read the 11th chapter of *Leviticus*, and you will see how the creatures are distinguished. The gentle, tame, and profitable kinds are allowed for food : and all creatures of wild, fierce, or filthy manners, are forbidden. Thus the Israelites were reminded daily by what they ate, what manner of persons they ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness ; by what was forbidden, they were taught to abhor the vices of the heathen. So saith the law itself : *Ye shall not walk in the manners of the nations which I cast out before you—I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people ; ye shall therefore put a difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean—and ye shall be holy unto me ; for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people that ye should be mine* *. This passage puts the moral intention of the distinction of meats out of dispute, and

* Lev. xx. 23, &c.

is indeed a direct affirmation of it: the people of God were to avoid *unclean meats*, as a sign that he had separated them from *unclean Gentiles* to be *holy* unto himself.

But in the fulness of time, when the Gentiles were to be admitted to Christian baptism, and taken into the church with the Jews, this act of grace in the divine œconomy was signified to *St. Peter*, by a new licence to feed upon unclean beasts. The case was this: Peter was about to be invited to preach the gospel to *Cornelius a Roman, into whose house he could not come*; because the law which he had always observed commanded the Jews to keep themselves separate from heathens in their conversation; as, in their diet, they abstained from unclean beasts.

While this matter was depending, Peter fell into a trance, and saw a vision. A great sheet, knit at the four corners, was let down to the earth, containing all those living creatures which were forbidden food by the Levitical law, and he was commanded to kill and eat: to which, when he objected, as being contrary to the law, a voice said, *what God hath cleansed, that call not thou common*. The message from *Cornelius* which immediately followed, shewed the design of this vision; that it signified

nified the reception and cleansing of the Gentile world, and that the Jews were no longer to count them unclean. So Peter himself thus explained it when he visited Cornelius: *Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.* Therefore those living creatures of all kinds, which had been presented to him in the vision, were the people of all nations; the linen sheet which contained them signified their sanctification by the gospel; and it was knit at four corners, to shew that they were gathered together from the four quarters of the world, and brought into the church.

Nothing more need be said to prove that the distinctions amongst men were figuratively expressed under the law by a distinction amongst beasts and birds and all living creatures. In the subtilty of the fox, the fierceness of the tyger, the filthiness of the swine, the impudence of the dog, you see, as in a glass, the manners of those idolatrous nations, from whom the Jews were separated. In the gentleness of the sheep, the integrity of the labouring ox, the innocence and profitableness of other tame creatures fit for food, you see the virtues of an
Israelite

Israelite indeed, such as those people ought to be, who were gathered into the fold of the church, and had God for their shepherd. But when God had mercy upon all, and the Jew and Gentile became one fold in Christ Jesus, then this distinction was set aside. However, to all readers of the bible, the moral or spirit of this law is as much in force as ever. Wild, subtle, fierce, unclean manners, are as hateful in Christians, as they were of old in heathens: and the heathens were taken into the church, on condition that they should put off their savage manners; as the unclean creatures had before put off their natures and became tame, when they were admitted into the ark of Noah, a figure of the church. This change was again to happen under the gospel; and the prophet foretells the conversion of the heathens under the figure of a miraculous reformation of manners in wild beasts: *the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together*; and though they were once so fierce and terrible that a man dared not to come near them, they shall be so changed, that a *little child* may lead them—they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.

Authors of natural history divide their sub-

ject into three parts, under the heads of animals, plants, and minerals—I would follow the same order to keep my subject within a moderate compass.

Plants are applied to explain the growth of the mind, with its different qualities and productions. Thus preached John the Baptist: *The ax is laid unto the root of the trees ; therefore every tree which beareth not good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.* At the transgressions of former times God had winked, and suffered men to walk in their own ways ; but now the serious day of reformation was come, and men were commanded to repent or to look for speedy execution ; which accordingly came upon the unbelieving Jews, who did not take the Baptists warning. The ax was sharp ; and the hand that held it being just and irresistible, it soon laid them level with the ground.

In the first psalm, the righteous man is described as *a tree flourishing by the water side*, and bringing forth its fruit in due season. Such is he whom the grace of God attends, and whose delight is in meditating day and night upon the law of the Lord ; while the ungodly are like unprofitable *chaff, driven away by the wind*. No fruitless tree will be permitted to remain

remain in the plantation of God, nor be able to stand when the storm of judgment arises. Christians who do not persevere, but fall away into a sinful and unprofitable life, are compared to trees whose fruit withereth, twice dead, plucked up by the roots : dead once by nature, and dead again unto grace, after they had been revived by the reception of the gospel : of such there is no hope.

The transitory nature of man in this mortal life is shewn by the herbs of the field ; and the scripture draws this picture with such beauty as far surpasses the most laboured poetical elegies on mortality—*In the morning it is green and groweth up ; in the evening it is cut down, dried up and withered* *.—*All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field :—the grass withereth, the flower fadeth ; but the word of our God shall stand for ever* †. In their decay, the herbs of the field are patterns of man's mortality ; but in the order of their growth, from seeds dead and buried, they give a natural testimony to the doctrine of the resurrection ; and the apostle therefore speaks of bodies rising from the dead as of so many seeds springing from the ground. The prophet Isaiah speaks as expressly upon the same subject :

F 3

thy

* Psalm xc,

† Isaiah xl. 6.

*thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise : awake and sing ye that dwell in the dust : for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead **.

Much instruction is to be gathered from the treasures which men take (with other views) from beneath the earth : for perishable riches are figures of the *true riches*, which give in substance what the other give in shadow : these are the riches of the mind ; and though of little esteem with the generality of the world, they are yet of infinite value to those that possess them. The apostles of Jesus Christ were poor in appearance, but could boast of being able to *make many rich* in faith and knowledge. The gifts of God to the mind are represented in one of the parables as so many *talents* of money, entrusted to men by the Lord of all things, with which they are to traffick in this state of probation, and improve them to the best of their power. He who makes no improvement will lose what he has got, and then he is poor indeed.

In the prophecy of Daniel, the four monarchies of the world were signified by the chief metals which are taken from the earth, all united in that visionary image which appeared
to

* Isaiah xxvi. 19.

to Nebuchadnezzar. The *head of gold* meant the *Assyrian* monarchy; the breast of *silver* was the *Persian*; the *brazen* part was the *Grecian*; and the legs and feet of *iron* and *clay* were the *Roman*. The last was inferior to all the rest in quality, but exceeded them in strength, as iron breaks all other things in pieces. The kingdom of Christ, arising in the time of the fourth monarchy, is meant by the *stone cut out of the mountain* (that is, out of the church) *without hands*, to smite this mighty image of worldly power upon the *feet*, and overthrow it. Accordingly, as christianity grew stronger, the Roman empire declined, and was soon reduced nearly to the state in which we now see it*.

We have taken a review of the natural creation, so far as the compass of these Lectures will permit, and have seen how the scripture has applied the several parts of it for the increase of our faith and the improvement of our understandings. Thus we are taught how to make the best and the wisest use to which this world can be applied. The Creator himself hath made this use of it, in revealing his will by it, and refer-

F 4

ring

* The reader may see the three kingdoms of plants, animals, and minerals, considered more at large in Three Discourses preached at *Fairchild's* Lecture, by the author of this work. Printed for Messrs. *Robinson*, Pater-noster-row.

ring man to it for instruction from the beginning. For this use he intended it when it was made ; and without such an intention, there never could have been such an universal agreement between nature and revelation.

In this use of the world men differ from brutes, who can see it only with the eyes of the body, and can apply it to nothing but the gratification of the appetites. The ambitious and the covetous are wasting their time to gain as much as they can of it, without knowing what it is ; as children covet new books for the pictures and the gilding, without having sense to improve by what is within them. To those who consider only how the creation can furnish matter to their lusts and passions, it is no better than a vain shadow : but to those who take it rightly, it is a shadow of heavenly things ; a school in which God is a teacher ; and all the objects of sense in heaven and earth, and under the earth, are as the letters of an universal language, in which all nations have a common interest.

There was an opinion, (I should rather call it a *tradition*) amongst some heathen philosophers, that the *world is a parable*, the literal or bodily part of which is manifest to all men, while the inward meaning is hidden, as the soul in
the

the body, the moral in the fable, or the interpretation in the parable *. They had heard there

* Εξέστι γὰρ καὶ τοῦ Κόσμου ΜΥΘΟΝ εἶπαι· σωματικὸν μὲν καὶ χρηματικὸν ἐν αὐτῷ φαινόμενον, ψυχικὸν δὲ καὶ νοητὸν κρυπτόμενον. Sallust. Περὶ θεῶν. cap. 3.

Κόσμος δὲ αὐτῷ τοῦ μὲν νοητοῦ οἶδεν ἡ βαρβάρος φιλοσοφία, τοῦ δὲ αἰσθητοῦ· τοῦ μὲν ἀρχέτυπον, τοῦ δὲ εἰκοναῖα καλυμμένη παραδειγματικῶς. Καὶ τοῦ μὲν ἀναλίσθησι Μοσάδῃ, ὡς αὖ νοητοῦ· τοῦ δὲ αἰσθητοῦ Εἰσαδῇ. Clem. Alex. Strom. Lib. 5. p. 412.

“ We may call the world a fable, or parable ; in which
“ there is an outward appearance of visible things, with an
“ inward sense which is hidden as the soul under the
“ body.

“ There is a barbarous philosophy, (*i. e.* a *foreign* philosophy) which hath a knowledge of the *sensible* and the
“ *intellectual* worlds ; the one being the archetype or original, the other an image or copy of it. It compares the
“ intellectual to *unity*, and the sensible to the number *six*.”

This barbarous philosophy, so called by Plato, whose doctrine is here repeated by Clemens Alexandrinus, was nowhere to be found but in the bible ; which in its week of days, has a single day, the sabbath, answering to the divine rest of the invisible world, and six days allotted to the works of this present world. Nothing but the Mosaic cosmogony, which describes the creation of the natural world in six days, and makes one heavenly day of the sabbath, could be the original of this philosophy mentioned by Plato.

That certain characteristics of divine truth are legible in the works and ways of Nature, is no new doctrine. It hath been supposed by some, and lightly touched upon by others ; but never pursued (as I have found) to any

74 *On the Figurative Language, &c.* LECT. III.

there was such a thing ; but to us the whole secret is opened, by the scripture accommodating all nature to things spiritual and intellectual ; and whoever sees this plan with an unprejudiced mind, will not only be in a way to understand the bible, but he will want no other evidence of the Christian doctrines.

good effect. The two preceding Lectures give some little prospect of it as it stands in scattered passages of the scripture. But I am so much affected to the plan, that I have drawn out two Lectures upon it, under the title of *the Natural Evidences of the Christian Religion*, not yet published.

LECTURE IV.

ON THE ARTIFICIAL OR INSTITUTED FIGURES OF THE LAW OF MOSES.

NEXT in order to those figures of the scripture which may be called *natural*, as being taken from nature, we are to examine those which are borrowed from the institutions of the law, and may be called *artificial*, as being ordained and accommodated to this purpose by the lawgiver himself.

The chief ordinances of the law are referred to in the prophets, the psalms, and the new testament, and many passages are cited from thence and treated of by Christ and his apostles, which will serve as a key to the language of the law, and shew us the intention of its ceremonies and precepts.

St.

St. Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews, gives us this general idea of the law, that it had *a shadow of good things to come* *; by which he means to teach us, that it was in its ordinances a figure of the blessings of the gospel. It was, as a shadow is, just and descriptive in its lineaments, but it had in itself neither substance nor life. When the gospel refers us to the law, it refers us to a shadow of itself; and such references will necessarily be figurative and want an interpretation; of which I shall now proceed to give some examples.

Among the institutions of the law, the first place is due to its sacrifices and priesthood; and the first and greatest sacrifice of which we have any particular description is that of the passover. From this the apostle instructs us in the benefits of Christ's death, together with the qualifications necessary to a participation of them; and in so doing he uses the terms of the institution itself; *Christ our passover is sacrificed for us* †. This expression carries us back to the cause and end for which the passover was instituted; and it appears from this reference of the apostle, 1. That Christ is what the passover was, a lamb taken from the flock of his people. 2. That he was a sacrifice, put
to

* Heb. x. 1.

† 1 Cor. v. 7.

to death as an offering to God. 3. That this was done *for us*, for our redemption and deliverance from the divine wrath; as the passover was sacrificed for the redemption of the Hebrews, when the first born of Egypt were destroyed.

All this is comprehended in the use the apostle has made of those terms: and this will be still plainer, if we attend to the particulars. For the character of our blessed Saviour was answerable in all respects to that of the paschal lamb: he was without blemish, innocent and perfect in his nature; and, as the prophet describes him, like the *lamb when brought to the slaughter* *, meek and unresisting. When John the Baptist pointed out Jesus to the Jews as the Messiah, he chose to do it in those words, *behold the lamb of God* †; see and acknowledge the true passover which God himself hath provided, not for the deliverance of a single nation, but to *take away the sin of the world*. Whatever the law had ordained concerning the offering of lambs in the passover, and in the daily sacrifices of the morning and evening, all is explained in this short reference of John the Baptist, applying the sacrifices of the law to the true *lamb of God*. In the same gospel of St.

* Isaiah liii. 7.

† John i. 29.

St. John we find another remarkable allusion to the institution of the passover. From the circumstance which happened at our Saviour's death, that *his legs were not broken* with those of the two malefactors, the evangelist observes, *these things were done that the scripture should be fulfilled, a bone of him shall not be broken*; at which passage the margin of our best editions of the bible refers us to Exodus xii. 46. where this direction is given concerning the passover, *neither shall ye break a bone thereof*.

If we look to the design or occasion of his sacrifice, we find it the same in effect with that of the passover: for as that was slain for the Hebrews in Egypt, so was He sacrificed *for us*. The first born of Israel would have been destroyed with those of Egypt, but for the blood of the paschal lamb upon the doors of their houses; and we also who are, as the Hebrews were, in a land of bondage, among sinful people devoted to destruction, shall not escape the divine wrath in that night when the destroyer shall be sent out, but in virtue of the true passover: therefore we are said to *have redemption through his blood*. The term *redemption*, as applied to the salvation of sinners by Jesus Christ, is taken in a figurative sense. It signifies literally the release of a captive or guilty person, in consideration of something accepted in lieu of him.

him. All men are in a state of forfeiture, sold under sin, and captives of satan : out of which condition, they are *not redeemed with silver and gold*, as common captives, *but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot* ; that is, as the Hebrews were in Egypt by the blood of the passover.

The frame of mind in which we are to celebrate the Christian passover, is described to us in terms borrowed from the Jewish : this feast we are to keep with *the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth* ; free from all impure mixtures of worldly affections, pharisaical pride, hypocrisy, and false doctrine. To which those other descriptive ceremonies may be added, of having *our loins girded, our shoes on our feet, and our staves in our hands* ; in the garb and posture of *pilgrims*, soon to depart from the Egypt of this world.

Some other forms with which sacrifices were offered are of great account, and will explain to us the sense of many passages not otherwise to be understood. Christ as our substitute, is said to have *borne* our griefs and carried our sorrows ; and the Lord is said to have *laid on him the iniquities of us all* *. According to the form prescribed in the law, when a sacrifice was

* Isaiah liii. 4. 6.

was brought to the priest, it was the custom for the sinner, *or the congregation at large**, as the occasion might require, to lay their hands upon the head of the victim, and confess their sins upon it, which the innocent animal about to die was to bear for them; and the sins so transferred from the sinner to the offering were to be done away. This shews us what was meant by the prophet, when he said, *the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all*; that is, he hath laid upon the head of Christ, as upon a devoted sacrifice, the sins of all mankind.

In the case of what was called the *scape goat*†, the animal, with this burden of sin upon his head, was turned loose into a wilderness, into *a land not inhabited*, no more to be seen of men: with allusion to which it is said in the Psalms, *as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he set our sins from us*‡, no more to be remembered or heard of to our condemnation. There seems to be another reference to the same in those words of Jer. l. 20. “the iniquity of Israel shall be *sought for*, and “there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, “and they shall *not be found*.”

On

* The elders of the congregation (see Lev. iv. 15.) or the high priest in the name of the congregation. (see Lev. xvi. 24.)

† Lev. xvi. 22.

‡ Psalm ciii. 12.

On one particular occasion, the congregation were commanded to lay their hands upon the head of the guilty person, before he was carried out to execution : which ceremony explains what is said of those for whom no atonement was to be accepted, that they should *bear their iniquity* ; they should suffer for it themselves and be their own sacrifice. So again, where it is said, *his blood shall be upon his head**, it means that the person in this case should be answerable for the guilt of his own death. And when the Jews blasphemously cried out, *his blood be on us and on our children*, they meant, that whatever sin there might be in putting Jesus to death, they would venture to have the guilt of it laid upon the heads of themselves and their posterity, and atone for it in their own persons ; which they have accordingly, by the just judgment of God, been doing ever since.

This laying of sin upon the head of a sacrifice, gives us a farther understanding of what happened to Christ in his passion, when the curse of our sins was crushed with heavy and merciless hands upon his head, in the form of a crown of thorns ; under which afflicting burden he was duly prepared as an offering for sin. Hence we also see the meaning of a like

VOL. IV.

G

form

* Joshua ii. 19.

form which has a contrary intention ; for as the curse of guilt was laid on the head of a sacrifice ; so blessings of every kind are conveyed by the laying of hands on the heads of the persons who are appointed to receive them. Thus our Saviour took the little children into his arms, and when he blessed them he *laid his hands upon them* : thus also the sick were restored to the blessings of health ; and thus the ministers of God receive their commission, with the gifts necessary to the exercise of it : *stir up the gift of God*, saith Paul to Timothy, *which is in thee by the putting on of my hands* *.

When Christ is said to be a *priest*, we must understand the word in a new sense ; for certainly he was not a priest in a literal sense, neither could he officiate according to the forms of the law, because he was not of that tribe to which the priesthood pertained. He is therefore called a priest *after the order of Melchizedec*, whose priesthood was prior and superior to that of the Levitical order, and carried with it the administration of *bread and wine* †, after the form of the gospel itself. Yet still we must go to the Levitical law, for the nature of the office, and the proper character of
our

* 1 Tim. i. 6.

† Gen. xiv. 18.

our high priest. *Such an high priest became us,* saith the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, *who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens* *. Such an high priest as the law had in all respects, according to the letter; such ought we to have in the spirit; one in whom all the outward signs of holiness and perfection requisite to the high priesthood of the law should be inwardly verified and accomplished; with no blemish of nature, no defilement of sin; sanctified by an eternal consecration, and exalted to execute that office in the heaven itself, which the high priest performed yearly in the most holy place of the tabernacle. Even the clothing of the high priest was not without its signification; his garments were expressive of purity, sanctity and divinity itself: they are therefore called *holy garments* †; and there is a reference to them in the psalms which gives them this meaning, *let thy priests be clothed with righteousness* ‡; let them be in spirit and truth what their clothing outwardly signifies: The *fine white linen* worn by the priest is here applied in its emblematical capacity to spiritual sanctification; and it is thus interpreted for us in the Revelation; *the fine linen is the righteousness*

G 2

* Heb. vii. 26. † Exodus xxviii. 4. ‡ Psalm cxxxii. 9.

teousness of saints *. The sense of this is still preserved amongst us, with those who understand it right ; it being the custom for a bride to go to her marriage in *white*, as a testimony of her virgin state ; and they who minister in the church, either to serve, or to pray, or to sing, are clothed in white linen, to signify the purity which is proper to their calling, and should be found in their characters. The evangelists in their accounts of our Saviour's transfiguration are all of them very particular as to that one circumstance, that *his raiment was white as the light*. This divine splendour of his person was denoted by the splendour of the high priest's garments, which are said to have been appointed *for glory and for beauty* ; such beauty as is applied in the psalms to its proper sense, *the beauty of holiness* †. This cloathing of light was proper to an earthly high priest, only in consideration of his being a representative of that divine intercessor, who was to be *the glory* as well as the priest of his people Israel.

Such dignity hath God been pleased to grant to his ministers ; not for their own sakes, but from their relation to Jesus Christ. As the Jews shewed all reverence to their high priest, much

* Rev. xix. 8.

† Psalm xcvi. 9.

much more ought we to ours, and to all that act in his name, for his sake : and they who think meanly of the priesthood, or speak of it with contempt, as some do of malice, and some of ignorance, shall one day see heaven and earth fly away from before the face of a priest.

When the name of a priest is applied to Christ in the new testament, we understand the term in a figurative sense, and go to the law for its literal meaning ; because Christ did not serve at the altar, nor officiate in the temple, nor was of the family of the priesthood. Whereas in truth, he was the original, and they of the law were figures of him. Had it not been for his priesthood fore-ordained of God, there never had been such a thing as a priest in the world. Why was one man appointed to intercede for another ? Where can be the sense and reason of it ? For why cannot that man as well intercede for himself ? It was to shew that there should be in the fulness of time one to intercede effectually for all : and that this great intercessor should be *taken from among men*, like the other priests who were before him : this is the true reason why some men in preference to others were admitted to intercede ; though still on a level with the rest, and obliged to offer sacrifices *for their own sins*.

In one respect we are to this day in the state of the Jewish people. They could not offer their own sacrifices ; they were to bring them to the priest and he was to offer them. So cannot we now offer up our prayers and praises to God but by Jesus Christ ; and so the apostle applies the case for us ; *by him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.* Yea and even under the law, while the earthly high priest served, as a shadow, to present the offerings of the people to God, it was understood by the prophets that he was no more than a shadow, and that there was another divine priest to whom the office properly belonged. For who is he that saith in the 16th psalm, *their drink offerings of blood will I not offer nor make mention of their names within my lips ?* David was no priest ; and though he was a king, he could offer no sacrifice either for himself or for others. The passage refers to the impure and unsanctified offerings of the heathens who went *after other gods* ; yet he, who refuses to offer these, must be the person whose office it is to present to God, as the common intercessor, the offerings of all men : for the speaker here is the same as in the 10th verse, where the same priest saith, *thou wilt not*

not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer thy holy one to see corruption ; which words are expressly said to have been spoken of the resurrection of Christ : as the next words are of his exaltation.

—Thou wilt shew me the path of life : in thy presence is the fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore : for certainly this place at the right hand of God is the place of the Son of God, which he assumed when he ascended into heaven ; this was the joy which the prophets and the psalms had set before him, for which he endured the cross and despised the shame of it. This is the priest who saith all these things ; it was therefore declared to those who were under the law, that there was another high priest, above him that ministered in the tabernacle or temple, by whose invisible ministration, the offerings of men were to be presented and made acceptable to God. So plain and direct is the doctrine of this psalm, that St. Peter, by an application of it to the person of Christ, converted three thousand souls at once.

As the words of the apostle above-mentioned, relating to the priesthood of Christ, are spoken with reference to the figures and prophecies of the old testament, it must have been declared therein that we should have a priest *higher than*

the heavens: for that such an one *became us*, inasmuch as every other would have fallen short of what the scripture had testified by prophetic signs and prophetic words: some of which I am now to set before you. Melchizedec was a sign of the priesthood of Christ; being not only *priest of the most high God*, but also a *king*, a person of royal majesty, and in dignity superior to the greatest man upon earth, because he blessed the father of the faithful; and *the less is blessed of the greater*. It follows therefore from this character of Melchizedec, that to the holiness of the priesthood there should be added in the person of Christ the majesty of a king; even of such a king as should have a throne in heaven itself. For thus is this priest spoken of in the 110th psalm: *The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand*: and in the subsequent verses of the psalm the same person is spoken unto as *a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec*: therefore the scripture, under the old covenant, gave notice of a priest who should *sit at the right hand* of God; and should of consequence be *higher than the heavens*. The argument from this psalm is very clear; but what the scripture hath said on the character and priesthood of Melchizedec is so important, and withal so mysterious, that the apostle hath a long and critical

critical discourse upon it in the epistle to the Hebrews; of which he himself gives us this as the sum: *we have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.*

The intercession of Christ as a priest in heaven was signified yearly in the service of the tabernacle, when the high priest went on the great day of atonement into the inner tabernacle, or holy of holies, with the blood of a sacrifice. From whence the same apostle argues, that Christ as our high priest should enter, not into the holy places made with hands, *which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us**. The holy place of the tabernacle is applied in the same manner to the residence of God in the invisible heavens in the 24th psalm; Who shall descend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his *holy place*? *he that hath clean hands, &c.* this may allude to the ceremony prescribed, for the high priest to wash himself with water † before he entered the holy place. Then follows a description of the majestic ascension and entrance of the *king of glory* into the *everlasting doors* of the heavenly places; and this psalm is accordingly appointed by the church

as

* Heb. ix. 24. † See Lev. xvi. 4.

as one of the proper psalms for the feast of the ascension. A sign was given that the heavenly places were opened, for himself first, and for all believers after him, in consequence of his overcoming the sharpness of death. The vail of the temple, by which the holy place was separated from the worldly sanctuary, or first tabernacle, was rent miraculously at his crucifixion, and that figure of the heaven was laid open, into which none but the high priest might enter: which circumstance is thus applied for us in the epistle to the Hebrews: *having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water**. These last words allude, as the correspondent ones before in the 24th psalm, to the custom of the high priest washing his flesh with water, before he was permitted to enter into the holy place: which ceremony is applied in the psalm to the purity of the great high priest himself; but in the language of the apostle with equal propriety to all Christians,

* Heb. x. 22, &c.

Christians, who are to partake of the benefits of his ministration in heaven, and to follow a pure high priest with purity of conscience.

Another rite pertaining to the priesthood, and of great signification in the scripture, is that of the high priest's consecration with the anointing oil: a sign of grace and authority from the spirit of God: and in virtue of this anointing, the high priest had power to heal the leprosy and other unclean diseases*, that the parties so cleansed might be fit to attend upon the service of the sanctuary, for which they were disqualified and in a state of excommunication†, so long as their uncleanness lasted. Thus in the new testament we read, that Jesus was *anointed* of God with the Holy Ghost and with power; in consequence of which he went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him‡. A leper, who had faith in his power, came and worshipped him, saying, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.* When this man was cleansed of his leprosy, he was commanded to shew himself to the priest, and to make the accustomed offering, for a *testimony unto them*: and as it was the office of the priest to cure this disease, this cure was a legal proof and testimony to the
priesthood

* *Ecy.* xiv. 13.† *Lev.* xv. 31.‡ *Acts* x. 38.

priesthood of the time, that there was a greater than themselves amongst them; who, though not literally anointed to the ministry, had the true anointing from the spirit of God, which had descended upon him after his baptism; and who should supersede them in their office; but it doth not appear what inference they made from the case.

As the gift of the spirit was communicated at the anointing of the high priest, and the spirit is the author of love and unity to the church, who are to *preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace*: we find a beautiful allusion, with an application of this rite to its mystical sense, in the 133d psalm: *Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity: it is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down unto the beard, even unto Aaron's beard, and went down to the skirts of his garments.* It was always an undoubted truth in every state of the church, that unity is from the spirit of God; beginning in those of superior authority, and spreading itself with a progress of descent from the highest to the lowest members of the community: but the thing is most evident to us under the gospel; who are taught, that the church is the body of Christ; that he himself is the head of it; and that the divine
spirit

spirit first shed upon him, is from thence diffused to all orders of Christians, to the least and lowest members of the church.

The scripture has numberless other references to the sacrifices and priesthood of the law, more than the plan of these lectures will admit: for I do not undertake to explain *all* that is referred to in the law: my meaning is to shew, by several examples, in what manner the scripture itself applies the institutions of the law; and by so doing, I put a light into the hands of those who read the bible, with which they may go farther, and examine things for themselves. Yet, among the offerings of the tabernacle and temple, there are two more for which I shall have room in this discourse; I mean the *first fruits* and the *burning of incense*.

In 1 Cor. xv. Christ, as risen from the dead, is called the *first fruits*; but now, saith St. Paul, *is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept*. From the term thus applied he confirms, and opens in a wonderful manner, the doctrine of the Resurrection; and therefore it is proper we should have a right understanding of it. When the harvest was ripe, and ready for the sickle, a first sheaf was reaped and carried into the temple, where the priest waved it before the Lord to be accepted;
and

and till this was done, the rest of the harvest was not sanctified to the use of the people, nor had they any right to partake of it.

The use the apostle makes of this is very extensive. In the first place, the growing of grain from the earth where it was buried, is an exact image of the resurrection of the body: for as the one is *sown*, so is the other, and neither is *quicken*ed, except it first die and be buried.—Then the whole harvest, from its relation to the first fruits, explains and ensures the order of our resurrection. For, is the sheaf of the first fruits reaped? Then is the whole harvest ready. Is Christ risen from the dead? Then shall all rise in like manner. Is he accepted of God as an holy offering, and lifted up in his heavenly sanctuary? Then shall every sheaf that has grown up with him be taken from the earth and sanctified in its proper order; *Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.*

If there seems any impropriety in making Christ the first fruits, when we know that others were raised to life before him; as the Shunamite's son by Elisha, and Lazarus by Christ himself: it is to be observed, that they were *raised*; he only *rose* from the dead by his own power, as the grain springeth from the ground of itself.—

Besides,

Besides, though they were raised, they died again; but Christ *being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him*: He was the *first* who rose to *life eternal*. Nothing followed to mankind from the resurrection of others; but He sanctified the harvest of the whole field, and had the *efficacy* as well as the appearance of the *first-fruits*.

Saint Paul in his apology before King Agrippa pleaded in defence of his doctrine, that he said none other things than *those which the Prophets and Moses did say should come*; that *Christ should suffer**, and that *he should be the first that should rise from the dead*. Now these things are no where said by Moses in the letter; therefore they were foretold figuratively and in the spirit. Christ, according to the doctrine of Moses, was to *suffer* in the *Passover*, and to *rise again* in the *first fruits* of the harvest. And as this assertion of the Apostle shews us the style and manner in which Moses preached the gospel, it is of great importance to us in our present enquiry.

The other offering, which I proposed to speak of, is that of the daily *incense*. Morning and evening it was to be offered up upon an altar of gold, where no bloody sacrifice was to come †.

This

* Acts xxvi. 22.

† Exodus xxx. 8, 9.

This offering the Psalmist refers to in his devotions, and explains its meaning by his application of it: *Let my prayer be set forth in thy sight as the incense.* As the smoke and odour of this offering was wafted into the holy place, close by the veil of which stood the altar of incense; so do the prayers of the faithful ascend upwards, and find admission into the highest heaven. *Cornelius*, said the angel, *thy prayers are come up for a memorial before God* *. The prayer of faith is acceptable to God, as the fragrance of incense is agreeable to the senses of man: and as the incense was offered twice a day, in the morning and evening, the spirit of this service is to be kept up at those times throughout all generations. The prophet *Malachi* foretold that it should be observed throughout the world: *from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered to my name* †. In the Revelation we hear of this incense as now actually carried up and presented in heaven: where the *elders fall down before the lamb with golden vials in their hands, filled with odours* (of incense) *which are the prayers of saints* ‡. Happy are they who fulfil this service; and at the rising

* Acts x. 4.

† Mal. i. 11.

‡ Rev. v. 8.

rising and going down of the sun send up this offering to heaven, as all Christians are supposed to do, at least twice in every day. What then are they, and to whom do they belong, who do not pray? What is their incense? Perhaps it is nothing but a faithless murmuring and complaining against the Providence they ought to bless and adore. Perhaps, they call upon God for curses upon themselves and others: and then their *mouth*, instead of offering incense, is an *open sepulchre*, sending forth the filthy odours of death and uncleanness. From this unprofitable and most miserable state, may God deliver all Christian families, who look for any blessing upon themselves and their affairs: may his grace open their lips, and dispose their affections; that they may meet together in peace, and make a morning and an evening sacrifice to that God whose eyes are upon them all the day long; who made them, and redeemed them, and is alone able to save those that call upon him through Jesus Christ.

LECTURE V.

SOME FARTHER EXAMPLES, WHICH SHEW HOW THE LANGUAGE OF THE OTHER PARTS OF THE SCRIPTURE IS BORROWED FROM THE LANGUAGE OF THE LAW OF MOSES, AND TO BE INTERPRETED THEREBY.—THE TEMPLE, THE SABBATH, CIRCUMCISION, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN ANIMALS, &c.—THE WONDERFUL TESTIMONY OF THE LAW TO THE RELIGION OF JESUS CHRIST.

NEXT in order to the offerings and the priesthood of the law, is the *place* of divine worship, wherein these services were accomplished, called *the tabernacle*; to which the scriptures both of the old and new testament refer us in many figurative passages, for the
right

right understanding of which, we must first enquire what the tabernacle was in itself.

It was a moveable habitation; like a large tent, first erected in the wilderness, when the Israelites were on their pilgrimage to Canaan. It contained two apartments; the first of which was called the *Holy Place*, appointed for the daily services of sacrifice and prayer; beyond which there was an inner apartment, called the *most Holy Place*, in which a service was performed once in a year by the high priest only: and these two apartments were separated by a veil reaching from the top to the bottom. In the most holy place, the presence of God was manifested, and his glory is said on some occasions to have filled the tabernacle: but it was usual for this glory to appear above or between the cherubims, which were placed here upon the mercy-seat which covered the ark; on which account the apostle in the epistle to the Hebrews calls them *the cherubims of glory*; and the Psalmist speaks of them as the proper seat of the divine Majesty—*Thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth* *.

H 2

There

* If the reader wishes to enquire into the form and design of the Cherubim, more particularly than the intention of these lectures will permit me to do, as being designed for general use, I must refer him to the last edition of Mr.

Park-

There was this remarkable distinction between the two apartments of the tabernacle; that as the one was the place of God's residence, the habitation of his holiness; the other had a conformity with this present world; whence the apostle calls it a *worldly sanctuary*, or world-like sanctuary, that is, a sanctuary resembling this visible world; as must indeed be evident to those who consider what relation it bore to the other sanctuary: how it was distinguished in its use from the most holy place which was the habitation of God; and how it was furnished with lights, as the visible heavens are, the chief of which are seven in number, and the lights of the tabernacle were made to answer them. From this known relation between the visible world and the sanctuary, the heavens are called the *tabernacle of the sun*; the whole world itself, and the firmament of heaven, with its glorious furniture, being one great tabernacle, comprehending the luminaries of the day and night, represented in figure by the lamps of the tabernacle. *Josephus*, in his *Jewish Antiquities*, has preserved a tradition, that this was the design of them, and that they had respect

Parkhurst's Hebrew Lexicon; the most useful work, without exception, that has ever been published on the Literature or Philology of the sacred Language.

respect to the system of the heavens*. And this alliance between the furniture of the tabernacle and the furniture of the heavens, gives us a grand idea of the visible world; the inhabitants of which are all to consider themselves as comprehended in one great sanctuary, where the first and best employment (by necessary inference) is the service of that God who has brought them into it. Therefore the indevout mind, which is either ignorant or insensible of this doctrine of a sacred alliance and communion betwixt God and his creatures, is a poor intruder into the great temple of the world; on whom we ought to look as we should upon the rude savage, who should come staring into a Christian church in the time of divine service, without understanding what the nature of the place is, and how the people are employed.

From this description of the tabernacle we must proceed to the figurative acceptation of it: for that it actually was a figure, and had respect to things beyond itself, is shewn by the reasoning of St. *Paul* throughout the Epistle to the *Hebrews*; who there speaks of a *true*

H 3

tabernacle,

* The Emperor *Numa* placed a sacred fire in his temple, with the like allusion to the fire of the heavens; *foecum Vestæ virginibus colendum dedit, ut ad similitudinem cœlestium siderum custos imperii flamma vigilaret.* Flor. Hist. i. c. 2.

tabernacle, of a nature superior to that of the law, but signified and shadowed out by it. The same appears from the words spoken to Moses, *see thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount*: which direction was preserved, and is quoted in the new testament twice, to teach us, that the visible tabernacle was nothing more than a *copy* from an *heavenly original*, which came down from God out of heaven (like the *New Jerusalem* in the Revelation) and was exhibited to Moses in a vision on the mount. Hence the apostle argues for a prophetic relation to heavenly things in the earthly tabernacle. As we hear of a *Jerusalem that is above*, corresponding to the earthly Jerusalem; so was there always understood to be a heavenly tabernacle; the eternal residence of God, as the tabernacle below was his temporary residence, while his presence was with Moses and the Jews. This heavenly original must be understood, where the Psalmist speaks of the dwelling of the righteous man in *the secret place of the most High, under the shadow of the Almighty*, covering him with his wings, as the cherubim of glory are said to spread forth their wings in the secret place of the earthly sanctuary*.

So

* Psalm xci. 1, 4.

So where he saith in the 15th psalm, *Who shall dwell in thy tabernacle, or who shall rest upon thy holy hill?* No man can be so ignorant as to think that the godly were to expect their rest and reward in a tabernacle, which had no existence after the days of David. The words must refer to that other tabernacle spoken of by Isaiah, *a tabernacle that shall not be taken down, not one of the stakes thereof shall be removed* *. As there is an eternal throne of David on which the Messiah sits and reigns *for ever* †; so is there an eternal tabernacle, in which he is exalted as the head and ruler in his church; and both are united on another occasion.—*In mercy shall the throne be established, and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging and seeking judgment and hastening righteousness*: which words cannot be understood of the literal tabernacle, though they refer to the *mercy-seat* in the most holy place, over which God appeared enthroned in glory above the cherubim; with which in Ezekiel's vision of them, there was a likeness of a throne, with the appearance of a man upon it; and the whole together is called *the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord* ‡: whence we collect, that what Ezekiel saw was a visionary

H 4

appearance

* Isaiah xxxiii. 29.

† Luke i. 32.

‡ Ezekiel i. 26.

appearance of that seat of glory in the holy place, which was the instituted likeness of the seat of the divine glory in the heavens. And in a like vision of Isaiah, the throne of God, and the display of his glory, is still present in his temple: *I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple* *. So, where the same prophet saith, *Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory* †; the words *habitation* and *holiness* and *glory* all refer to the earthly sanctuary as a pattern of the heavenly.

The tabernacle was also a figure of the church of Christ: and therefore the renovation and establishment of the church amongst the Gentiles by the preaching of the gospel, is described under the idea of a restoration of the tabernacle which had ceased from the time of David. The prophet *Amos* speaks of this gathering of the Gentiles into the church of Christ, as into the tabernacle taken in this new sense; and St. James made the proper application of it, when the great question was debated concerning the reception of the heathens. *To this*, says he, *agree the words of the prophets, as it is written, I will return and will build again* the

* Isaiah vi. 1.

† Ib. lxiii. 15.

the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down—that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called *. To the same effect St. Stephen had observed in his apology to the Jews, that the tabernacle had originally *been brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles* ; and therefore the church might reasonably go thither again ; whereto the preaching of the gospel under the true Jesus should remove and settle it.

The propriety with which the Christian church is signified by this name, is too plain to be enlarged upon ; inasmuch as we have already seen, that all things are there done *in spirit and in truth*, which were done in figure in the tabernacle of the law.

But the tabernacle, as well as the temple, is farther applied as a figure of the body of Christ ; and this in a passage not open to common observation. *The word*, saith St. John, *was made flesh and dwelt amongst us* ; where the true sense of the original is, *he tabernacled amongst us* : and then it is added, *and we beheld his glory* ; for where the true tabernacle is, there must be also the glory of it. Here then we have the manifestation of Christ in the flesh,

* Acts **xy.** 6.

flesh, signified by the dwelling of God's presence in the tabernacle ; than which there can be no higher proof of his divinity to those that understand the thing in this light. As the glory of the Lord was once present in the tabernacle, so it is said, with reference to the same, that in him dwelt *all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*. Well therefore might he say of his body, *destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again* ; for it was both a tabernacle and temple in a stricter sense than had ever been before ; the Godhead had occasionally dwelt in the buildings made with hands ; but with him it abode continually. The use our Saviour made of this term amounted to an assertion of his Godhead to the Jews ; but as the Jews did not then understand the sense of his expression, so are many Christians as blind to it at this day.

After the pattern of Christ, and according to their proper measure, all Christians have the presence of God abiding within them ; whence their bodies also are the *temples of the Holy Ghost* ; from which consideration they are instructed to dedicate them, to the service of God ; for that is certainly one use of a temple ; and not to defile them for that is sacrilege. And the subject gives them
this

this consolation, that *though their earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved*, he who raised up the tabernacle of David from its ruins to a more glorious state in the Gentile world, and raised up the temple of Christ's body which the Jews destroyed, shall in like manner quicken our mortal bodies by the spirit that dwelleth in us, and give us *an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*.

It was observed above, that the *tabernacle of David* is a figurative term for the Christian church as the mystical body of Christ: we shall likewise find, that the blessings and privileges of the Christian society or assembly of Christian people do all correspond with the œconomy of the congregation of Israel, and are described in terms borrowed from the law; of which the following example in the epistle to the Hebrews will be sufficient, where the apostle says—*Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things*

things than that of Abel. Every Christian is to conceive what his own state is, by looking back to the privileges of the church of old. He is come to mount Zion, to a situation exalted above the world ; a mountain chosen and favoured of God, blessed with the dew of heavenly grace, and inheriting the promise of eternal life ; even to that holy hill, on which Christ is established as King against all the opposition of the world below. It is the new Jerusalem, because it is ordained to be, as that city was of old, at unity with itself, and a principle of unity to all the land ; where all the tribes of the earth unite in one religion, as the tribes of Israel assembled to worship at Jerusalem. The cities of the neighbouring nations were dedicated to some tutelary idol ; Jerusalem alone to the true and living God ; so now is the same God connected with the Christian city and with that only ; and all the company of heaven, innumerable as they are, who assisted at the delivery of the law, are with him. As the first-born of Israel, who had the right of inheritance, were redeemed and written down by name ; so are all the children of the Christian society enrolled in heaven as the first-born of God, and *the book of life* in which they are written answers to the register of the church
of

of Israel. We are come to God the *Judge* of all, because we are taken out of the world of the ungodly, who are aliens, to be subject to his laws, and consequently to be under his government. It is true that all the world are under the authority of God ; but then all are not related to him as citizens and subjects. In this respect, God was said to be nigher to the Jews than to any nation upon earth, because he was with them as their judge and protector. We have our Jesus, as they had their Moses ; both of them mediators, to stand between God and the people. The Hebrews were not permitted to draw near to God to treat for themselves on pain of death ; but Moses was to be between them, as Christ is now betwixt us and God, and no man can come to the Father but by him : and in his blood we have remission, as all things were purified under the law, and nothing accepted or sanctified without the blood of sprinkling ; which speaketh better things than that of Abel ; for the blood of Abel cried for vengeance, this for mercy and pardon.

Thus is our society on like terms with theirs in every respect : and to these particulars I may add, that as the congregation of Israel on great and solemn occasions was called together by the
sound

sound of a trumpet, so shall the great assembly of all nations, all the tribes of the earth, and we ourselves among the rest, be summoned after the same form : *the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised* : and then we shall see with our eyes what that great society is, in the which we now live by faith.

There are many particular institutions remaining, some of a religious, some of a moral, and others of a civil nature ; a few of the most useful of which I must select, and shew how the scripture has applied them.

The sabbath, which succeeds the labours of the week, appears to have been appointed from the beginning as a perpetual sign, a *sign for ever**, of that happy *Rest* which the servants of God are to expect after the *labours* of this life. For thus the apostle hath reasoned about it ; that being called the *Rest of God*, it cannot be of an earthly, but must be of an heavenly nature ; for God doth not rest upon earth where men labour. He shews that the true rest promised to the faithful was not the sabbath that was appointed after God had finished his works ; nor yet the state of rest, so called, in the land of Canaan ; because the promise is still suspended, and repeated again in the time of David :

* Exodus xxxi. 17.

David: whence he concludes that it was a rest never yet fulfilled in this life, but still *remaining for the people of God*, and into which the faithful enter when they die in the Lord and *rest from their labours*. I say no more of this here, because I have considered the subject more at large in my lectures on the epistle to the Hebrews, to which it properly belongs.

Circumcision was that rite of the law by which the Israelites were taken into God's covenant; and (in the spirit of it) was the same as baptism among Christians. For as the form of baptism expresses the putting away of sin; circumcision was another form to the same effect. The scripture speaks of a *circumcision made without hands*, of which that made with hands was no more than an outward sign, which denoted *the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh**, and becoming a new creature; which is the sense of our baptism. Of this inward and spiritual grace of circumcision the apostle speaks expressly in another place; *he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter*†. Some may suppose that
this

* Col. ii. 11.

† Rom. ii. 28.

this spiritual application of circumcision, as a sacrament, was invented after the preaching of the gospel, when the veil was taken from the law; but this doctrine was only enforced to those who had it before, and had departed from the sense of their own law: for thus did Moses instruct the Jews, that there is a *foreskin of the heart* which was to be *circumcised* in a moral or spiritual way, before they could be accepted as the servants of God; and again, that the Lord would *circumcise their heart, to love him with all their heart, and with all their soul**; which was the same as to say, that he would give them what circumcision signified, making them Jews inwardly, and giving them the inward grace with the outward sign; without which, the letter of baptism avails no more now than the letter of circumcision did then: and we may say of the one as it is said of the other, “He is not a Christian which is one outwardly, and baptism is *not the putting away the filth of the flesh* by washing with water, but *the answer of a good conscience towards God†.*”

Nearly allied to this was the precept which forbade them to touch any dead carcase; and, in case of any such accident, enjoined a religious purification by water. Here apply the general rule,

* Deut. x. 16. and xxx. 6.

† 1 Pet. iñ. 21.

rule, *he is not a Jew which is one outwardly*, and then you will understand, that outward defilement was not the thing to be feared, but the defilement of the mind, lest *evil communications* should corrupt good manners. This precept in its moral acceptation teaches that there is a certain relation between *death*, and *sin*, and *pollution*. For why do men die but for their sin? and also, that he who converses with such as are under the death of sin, that is, dead in spirit, dead to faith and holiness, will be defiled by their company, and will want washing; till which he will be unfit for the service of God. Thus the apostle himself explains the case; that as those who were unclean by touching a dead body, were purified with a lye made of the ashes of a sacrifice, so are our consciences to be purged from *dead works* to serve the living God*.

Another prohibition of the same nature is referred to for a like purpose, and the apostle thereby warns the Christians to avoid the society of the heathens; speaking in such terms as nothing but the law of Moses can truly explain: *be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers*; borrowing his expression from that law which forbade the Jews to *plough with an ox and*

* Compare Heb. ix. 13, 14, with Numb. xix. 11, &c.

an ass together, that is, with a clean and an unclean beast, between whom as there is no alliance of nature, they were not to be mismatched under the same yoke. This the apostle has applied to its true sense, in those words, *be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers**. Yet this law, on a proper occasion, was to be superseded, when the Jew and Gentile were both to join in the work of the gospel: which consideration explains that difficult passage in the prophet Isaiah—*Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass.*

On another occasion the same apostle shews us, that a law which seems to make provision for beasts, was intended for the benefit of God's ministers, and is to be so applied. The law saith, *thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.* Here, to prevent misunderstandings, the apostle asks a question, *Doth God take care for oxen?* Was his divine and holy law made for beasts? certainly not: but, for men; *for our sakes no doubt this was written*†. Although the words were spoken of beasts, the sense relates only to men; the precept being wholly intended to teach under a figure (as the law taught every thing else) that the ministers
of

* 2 Cor. vi. 14.

† 1 Cor. ix. 9, &c.

of God's word should be maintained out of the profits and offerings of the Church in which they serve, as the ox at the threshing-floor is justly permitted to take advantage of his labour, and to partake of the corn while he is treading it out for the use of man. Every labourer, whether he be an ox or a man, is worthy of his hire ; and if it is unjust and unmerciful to defraud a beast of his dues, it must be something much worse to invade the rights of the ministers of God's church. The precept therefore is stronger in its reason than if it had been delivered in plain words : yet it is to be questioned whether the reason of the thing, in any form, will prevail with all minds. Some there are in all countries who, though they would not defraud their oxen, would be glad to muzzle every Christian minister ; and that in more senses than one ; they would not only be glad to see him deprived of the rights of his ministry, but be better pleased if they could put a muzzle upon the ministry itself, and stop the offence of Christian preaching. But this they will never be able to do, till God shall be provoked to forsake the ministry who have first forsaken him ; and then the weakest hand that is lifted up may prevail against them.

There are two very remarkable prophecies, the one relating to the infidelity of the Jewish church,

church, the other to the person of the Messiah, which are the last I shall take notice of, both delivered in the figurative language of the municipal laws of the Jews.

If a woman was suspected to be an adulteress by a husband who was jealous of her, and there was no proof, she was to present herself before the priest and stand the trial of a water ordeal: *a bitter water which caused the curse* was to be offered to her; and when the curses were pronounced conditionally upon her supposed guilt, she was to venture the consequences, and say, Amen. The priest was to write down the form of the curses against her in a book, and to blot them out with the bitter water if she proved to be innocent; if not, they were then to remain there upon record against her. If she was actually defiled, this water was to go into her bowels and take effect upon her body in a fearful manner, and she was to be *a curse among the people**.

This institution explains some very difficult passages in the 109th Psalm, that prophecy of God's judgment against the apostate Jewish church: on whom, as upon a guilty adulteress against a jealous God, denying her sin, and defying the divine vengeance, the curse was to
take

* See Numb. v. 12, &c.

take effect as against a woman in the law. The psalm is worded as if it were meant of some single wicked person, and it is accordingly applied to the reprobation of Judas ; but other passages, and the use made of them by the inspired writers, shew that it must be extended to the Jewish church at large, of which Judas, in his name, and his sin, and his punishment, was no more than a leader and an example. Here then it is said, *when he shall be judged let him be condemned ;* when he is put to the trial, let him be found guilty ; and *let his prayer be turned into sin ;* let it be as that offering which *bringeth iniquity to remembrance,* without oil or incense to recommend it for acceptance : *let not the sin of his mother be blotted out,* but stand upon record as the curses against the sin of the adulteress, which the water was not to take away : *As he loved cursing so let it come unto him—let it come into his bowels like water,* even like that bitter water which descended with a curse into the bowels of the guilty woman. As she exposed herself in form to the curse, and said, Amen, to all the terms of it ; so did the Jews challenge the curse of heaven, which accordingly took place on them and their posterity.

The civil institution, applied to the person of

the Messiah, is that concerning the Hebrew servant, who having served six years, was to go free in the sabatīcal year, if he chose to depart; but if he was content with his service, and willing to continue in it, he was to be brought before the Judges, and to be fastened to the door, or the post of the door, by an awl driven through his ear, as a sign of his consent, and he was to serve his master for ever*.

Under an allusion to this example, the obedience of Christ in the flesh is foretold and illustrated in the Psalms; and a wonderful example it is: for here we are to observe, that, upon this occasion, no sacrifice nor offering is appointed; nothing passes but the obedience of a willing servant: therefore in the application of it to Christ, the prophet says, *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, but mine ears hast thou opened—burnt-offering and sin-offering thou hast not required; then said I, lo I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O God.* In the epistle to the Hebrews, the passage as cited by the apostle, and applied to the obedience and death of Christ, stands thus; *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me.* The sense is the same in both, though

* Exod. xxi. 6.

though the words are different. The apostle after the Greek version says, *a body hast thou prepared me* ; that is, a body wherein to suffer and be obedient unto death : the psalm says, *mine ears hast thou pierced* : for the word is the same as in the 22d psalm, *they pierced my hands and feet* ; and here the piercing of the ear, the symbol of obedience, was a sign of his suffering in that body which should be prepared for him. All this being a reference to the custom observed under the law toward the obedient servant, that custom was a standing testimony in the volume of the book of Moses, that the Messiah, taking the form of a servant, should offer himself freely to do the will of God for our salvation ; and in consequence of this determination, should be pierced in the body, as the willing servant was bored through to the post of the door ; the place where the blood of the passover was sprinkled with the same signification once every year.

In this and the preceding lecture I have endeavoured to shew, as my plan requires, how the language of the other parts of scripture is borrowed from the language of the law, and is to be interpreted thereby. To what has been said, give me leave to add a few general ob-

servations on the nature and design of the law of Moses.

St. Paul asks the question ; *wherefore then serveth the law ?* To which he gives this answer ; *it was added because of transgression, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made**. The expectation of the seed first promised in paradise, and afterwards to Abraham, was the sum and substance of the patriarchal faith ; and all the earliest institutions of priesthood and sacrifice were intended to keep up this expectation. But when the perverseness of men had changed and corrupted the primitive institutions for the base purposes of idolatry and the worship of false Gods, it became necessary on account of these frequent transgressions to add a written law, with a stated form of positive services, never to be altered nor departed from ; and all of them descriptive of the salvation which was to be effected by the promised seed ; whence you are not to wonder, that in him they all meet and find their interpretation.

They who were bound to the observation of the law, were thereby separated of necessity from the world ; and, as St. Paul very strongly expresses it, *shut up unto the faith which should afterwards*

* Galatians iii. 19.

*afterwards be revealed**; confined to a set of ceremonies and services, under which it was in a manner impracticable for them to evade the objects of their faith, when they should be revealed in their true form. Not only the substance of what was expected, but all the particulars and circumstantialia had been acted over in figure for ages together: and so the law was a *schoolmaster unto Christ*; preparing those who were under it for the reception of the gospel, and as it were forcing them upon it, if men could on that principle be reconciled to truth.

When the gospel appeared, the Jew should have reasoned thus with himself. Do they say Jesus died for our redemption? So did the paschal lamb die to redeem our whole nation in Egypt. Did he ascend afterwards into heaven? So did our high priest go yearly into the most holy place, carrying thither the blood of a sacrifice slain in the worldly sanctuary. Is there no remission of sin without shedding of blood?—There certainly was none under the law. Has Jesus appointed a baptism with water? So had our law its purifications for the washing away of uncleanness. Is the partition we have so diligently kept up between ourselves and the

Heathens

* Galatians v. 23.

Heathens to be broken down at last, and is the true religion to be carried out amongst all nations? So was our tabernacle brought from the solitary wilderness under Joshua, whom the Greeks call *Jesus*, into the *possession of the Gentiles*. Numberless other questions might be asked, shocking to the prejudices of a Jew, which would bring their own answers with them out of the law of Moses: and such was the use the Jew ought to have made of it.

From the various applications of particular passages from the law, previous to the revelation of the gospel, it appears that the law was in itself a spiritual as well as a figurative system, for the forming of the heart, and the purifying of the mind; yet conveying its precepts in parables and signs which wanted an interpretation: and that interpretation is occasionally dropped in so many parts of the scripture, especially in the Psalms, that the prophets and masters of Israel appear to have understood the law in a spiritual sense. If the bulk of the people did not understand it so, we must not impute this to any uncertainty or obscurity in Moses and the prophets, but to that carnal affection which naturally chuses the form of religion without the spirit of it. Their pride, their affectation of false wisdom, their avarice, their adultery, blinded them,

them, and made them as averse to the sense of a miracle wrought before their eyes, as to the sense of the darkest verse in the Pentateuch. The world always has been, and now is, to those that are shut up under its laws, a schoolmaster to turn men away from Christ ; and a conceited worldly-minded Christian, proud of the powers of reason without grace, is at this hour as blind to the spirit of the gospel as the Jew ever was to that of the law. For ignorance of the true *spirit* of Christianity, and the *design* of its doctrines, I would match the modern philosophising Socinian with the blindest Jew: for the one has made the gospel as void as the other made the law. Read the writings of some whose books have made a great noise in the present century, and you will know no more of the Christian church and the Christian sacraments, than the wandering Jew, who now travels about to cheat Christians with his wares, knows of the priesthood and sacrifices in the books of Moses.

The law is of use to us Christians for the illustration of the new testament, whose language and mysteries are so founded upon it, that the language of the gospels and epistles is unintelligible without a particular attention to the law; and in proportion as our knowledge of it en-
creases,

creases, our faith will grow stronger. Thus the law serves for evidence both to the Jew and Gentile; and the same schoolmaster, which should have brought them to Christ, will keep us with him. For, did the apostle in his preaching *say nothing but what Moses had said?* And did the gospel teach nothing but what the law had *signified* long before? Then must the gospel be that very salvation, which was known to God from the beginning, and in reserve to be made manifest to the world in the latter days.

This argument, clear and irresistible as it certainly is, will one day appear to the Jews as it does to us; when the scales of blindness shall fall from their eyes: and then it may be thought the greatest wonder of all, that they who had the old testament in their hands for eighteen hundred years, should never have seen the use of it before.

LECTURE VI.

ON THE FIGURES OF THE SCRIPTURES WHICH
ARE BORROWED FROM THE EVENTS OF
THE SACRED HISTORY.

THE Scripture is the authentic history of God's Providence ever since man had a being ; and in the conduct of God's Providence toward man, there is an uniformity of design, which hath proceeded according to the same laws of eternal justice and wisdom in all ages of the world : from which consideration it follows, that what God did in times past was an earnest, a pattern, and a sign, of what he might be expected to do in times to come. The godly were delivered, the wicked punished, the proud abased, the humble exalted, under like circumstances and after like forms at different periods

periods of time. Thus it hath been, and thus it will be : therefore things past are referred to in the scripture as figures of things to come, and so the history of the bible becomes a chain of prophecy, and is actually applied as such by the scripture itself ; as we shall see from a variety of examples.

I reckon two sorts of historical figures, the one general, the other particular ; the former being references to the history of places, and of such events as related to a people at large, or even to the whole world ; the latter referring us to the lives, actions, sufferings and successes of individual persons. Thus the saints of old were prophetic in their actions as well as in their words : of which some striking examples will occur to us as we proceed.

One of the most early and memorable events of the Scripture is that of the destruction of the world by the Flood ; from which Noah and his family were saved in an Ark, supported by those same waters which destroyed the world of the ungodly. This history of the Salvation of Noah is applied by St. *Peter* as a *figure* of that *Salvation* which we now obtain as the *family* of Jesus Christ in the Ark of the *Church* by the *waters* of *Baptism* : *the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was*

was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. A like figure whereunto, even Baptism doth now save us by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ *. By which it is to be understood, that the salvation of Christians by Jesus Christ, and the salvation of Noah's family, are two events of the like form and figure; the former a sign of the latter. And a wonderful sign it was, if we look into the particulars. Here was a judgment which extended to a whole world; a condemnation that passed upon all, except those who were of the family of Noah: as the wrath of God and a future judgment upon sin, to be executed by fire, is denounced against all mankind, except those who shall belong to the family of Jesus Christ. As an ark was prepared by Noah, so hath Christ prepared his Church, to conduct us in safety through the waves of trouble and the perils of the world, in which so many are lost. And as the waters of the flood carried Noah and his family into a new world after the old was drowned; so do the waters of baptism carry us into a new state with Jesus Christ, who passed over the waves of death and is risen from the dead. And this practical inference is to be made in favour of the ordinance of the Church;

* 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21.

Church ; that as the ark could not be saved but by water, so must all the Church of Christ be baptised. So plainly doth this whole figure speak the doctrine of the Christian Salvation, that it is applied for instruction in the office of Baptism, where we are taught to pray, that the child *may be received into the Ark of Christ's Church*, and therein *pass through the waves of this troublesome world*. Many other particulars belonging to this figure will explain themselves when the general sense of the figure is understood ; and therefore I need pursue it no further.

The confusion of tongues, with the dispersion of the nations, is another great event, which comes next in order of time, and ought not to be unnoticed, because it was reversed when all the nations, so divided at Babel, were *gathered together in one* in Christ Jesus, to be a *holy nation, a peculiar people* : and the different languages which arose at Babel were all united in the tongues of the first preachers of the Gospel on the day of Pentecost. God being the fountain of truth and author of peace, his religion makes itself intelligible to all ; but where there is disobedience of mind and wickedness of principle, there do confusion and division ensue, as in the first religious rebellion at Babel.

Against

Against such people, this judgment is denounced by the Psalmist ; *destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues, for I have seen violence and strife in the city* *. The city of God is at unity with itself ; but the city of the adversary, like *Babel*, the *Mother of Harlots*, is the Citadel of dispute and division. The false wisdom of this world begins and ends (if error has any end) with disputation and opposition. We see an example of this in the multitude of gods, and the many strange rites of worship, with the endless *oppositions of science falsely so called*, which arose among the sects of the heathen philosophers when the Greek and Roman learning flourished : and (to come nearer our own times) in the multitude of sectaries and heresies which have arisen since the Reformation, in this country, amongst those who paid no regard to the doctrines and discipline of the primitive Church. In a word, all those who set up themselves, and affect high things, in opposition to the wisdom of God, are cursed with confusion ; and there is no greater evidence of their error, than that they are never able to speak the same language.

After the events of the Flood, and the dispersion at Babel, the destruction of *Sodom* is to

be understood as a sign or prophetic figure of the future destruction of the world by fire, together with the deliverance of the faithful after the example of Lot. This history is referred to in the 11th Psalm, where the wicked are threatened with *fire and brimstone* to be *rained upon them from the Lord*, as formerly upon Sodom. St. Jude in his Epistle warns us that *Sodom and Gomorrah* are *set forth for an example* *, *suffering the vengeance of eternal fire*. And that short admonition of our Saviour, in one of his discourses, *Remember Lot's Wife*, teaches us what we ought to learn from the particulars of the story ; that as the world shall be destroyed by fire like Sodom, so a remnant shall be saved by the divine mercy ; and that of those who are taken by the hand to follow their deliverer and to *flee from the wrath to come* (which is another allusion to the same event) some shall turn back in their hearts and affections toward this wicked world, and so be *unfit for the kingdom of God* : a circumstance which should be thought upon with fear and trembling : for consider how that *unbelieving soul*, by favouring what was evil, lost all that was good, when it was in her power to escape ; as they will not fail to do, who either disbelieve God's judgment

* Jude vii.

ment upon the world, or think the world undeserving of it, and so take part with the wicked against the justice of God. When times and places are evil, and wickedness prevails with a high hand, the universality and power of corruption is dreadful to think of. When the world was drowned, *few*, that is, *eight Souls* only were saved in the ark ; and when Sodom was overthrown, a small remnant only were delivered ; whence we are to expect, that *as it was in the days of Lot, so shall it be in the day when the son of Man is revealed* : confidence in this world, and insolent disregard of truth and godliness shall generally prevail, and few indeed shall be left to receive him and escape with him when this Sodom wherein we now live shall be visited.

From a likeness of character in the Jewish people when they became abominable in their sins, the name of *Sodom* is given to their city, and they are threatened with the same fate. *Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom ; give ear unto the law of our God ye people of Gomorrah ;* saith the prophet *Isaiah* *. The prophet's message is to *Judah* and *Jerusalem* ; the rulers and people of which being fallen into great corruption, and strengthening them-

K 2

selves

selves in their wickedness, are addressed by the prophet as the rulers and the people of the abominable Sodom; and he pronounces that they would have met with the judgment of Sodom, but for the sake of the faithful who were still left amongst them, such as Abraham hoped to find when he interceded for Sodom: *except the Lord of Hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah**, that is, as like unto them in their punishment as they were in their manners. And now we shall see the reason why the Evangelist in the book of Revelation speaks of a *great city, which spiritually is called Egypt and Sodom, where our Lord was crucified*; for certainly our Lord was crucified at Jerusalem, and Jerusalem for its apostacy and the judgment that was to overtake it, is called by these names in the prophets: though the passage as it stands in the Revelation may be extended from the example of Jerusalem to the world at large.

I pass over the allegorical history of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar, the bond-woman and the free, because it hath been so fully commented upon by the apostle as a figure of the Jewish and Christian covenants. I cannot add
to

* *Isaiah i. 9.*

to his explanation ; and as I should be unwilling to contract it, I rather chuse to refer you to the consideration of it, as it stands in the fourth chapter of the epistle to the Galatians ; and shall proceed to the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, which is one of the most interesting and edifying histories of scripture ; as it gives us an example of all the dangers, temptations and deliverances that can happen in the life of man, during his progress and pilgrimage through the wilderness of this present world. For, in the first place, the translation of the church from Egypt to Canaan is applied in all its circumstances as a pattern of the translation of us Christians from the bondage of sin, to the enjoyment of our freedom in the kingdom of Christ. *Out of Egypt*, saith God by the prophet, *have I called my son* * : a declaration which is as truly verified in every child of God at this day, as when Israel was delivered from Pharaoh, and when the infant Jesus was brought back in safety from Egypt to his own kingdom and people.

Thus the redemption of the people of God from Egypt as a sign of a greater and more universal redemption, is a doctrine with which few readers of the scripture can be unacquainted.

quainted. The prophets warned the people not to rest in the redemption that was past, but to look for another, and that so much more excellent in its nature, that the former should in a manner be forgotten in comparison of it: *Remember not the former thing, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, saith the Lord, I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert* *. He promised also in one of the psalms, that he would bring his own people *again from the depths of the sea*; which can signify nothing but that universal redemption from sin and death in which all the nations of the world have an equal interest; because this Psalm is not addressed to the Jews, but to all the *kingdoms of the earth*; and is applied by the apostle to the victory of Jesus Christ over death, and to the miraculous gifts bestowed on the first preachers of the gospel †: so there can be no doubt as to the intention of the expression in question: it must have the same signification in figure as is expressed in the letter at v. 20.—*to the Lord our God belong the issues from death.*

But the figurative application of the history of the Exodus is much plainer in the new testament.

* Isaiah xlii. 18.

† Compare Psalm lxviii. 18. and Ephesians iv, 8,

tament. There we see Zacharias, in his prophetic hymn on occasion of the birth of John Baptist, celebrating the blessings of the Christian redemption in terms borrowed from the past redemption of Israel out of Egypt *. God is said to have *visited* and *redeemed* his people by raising up a Saviour in the house of David—to have performed the *mercy promised to the fathers*, which in the letter of it related to the deliverance from Egypt—to have *saved us out of the hands of our enemies, that we might serve him without fear*, as the Hebrews did, when they were no longer under the power of Pharaoh—and finally to *guide our feet into the way of peace*, as he had before guided his people to a peaceable settlement in the land of Canaan.

If we consider the history of the Exodus more particularly as an example of the circumstances of our redemption by Jesus Christ; the first thing that offers itself is the miserable servitude of the Hebrews under Pharaoh. Such is the natural state of every man who is born a sojourner in the Egypt of this world. As they laboured in clay and mortar, so is every man by nature the slave of vile and earthly affections. As the Hebrews were under Pharaoh, man is

K 4

under

* See the hymn called *Benedictus*.

under Satan, the proud enemy of the true God, and the irreconcilable and merciless persecutor of his church. From this miserable state, Christ as the messenger and minister of God is sent from heaven to deliver man, as Moses was raised up for a like purpose, and sent to lead the people out of Egypt; of whose office we shall have a farther prospect when we come to the second sort of historical figures. Look at the order of the redemption from Egypt, and you will find it agree in every particular with the order of the Christian salvation. The people were conducted to the waters of the red sea, where the apostle instructs us *they were all baptised unto Moses* * : they were all saved by water, as the family of Noah had before been saved at the flood, and as we are saved now. It doth not appear to us how they could have been saved from Pharaoh, but by the interposition of the waters of the sea. Here their salvation began, and the power of their adversary ended: and we know that Satan has not that sovereignty over baptized Christians as he has over men in the state of nature. After baptism a Christian is no longer the subject of that Tyrant, but the child of God, who undertakes thenceforth to conduct him through all the trials and

* 1 Cor. x. 2.

and dangers of this life to the inheritance promised to the fathers.

We see how man is to be supported in this life, and to what dangers he is exposed in the way of his salvation, if we observe what happened to the Hebrews in their way through the wilderness. *No temptation befalls us but such as is common to man*, and of which their case gives us an example. The things which befell them are not only apposite and applicable to our own case, but St. Paul affirms they were purposely ordained by the providence of God to answer this very end: *Now all these things happened to them for enſamples; (or, as the margin calls them, types) and they are written for our admonition**. And here we are to note, as the apostle himself does next after their baptism, how they were fed and supported. They might have been carried a short way through a fruitful country to the land of Canaan; but it pleased God to lead them into a wilderness, where there was neither meat nor drink: which made some of them suspect he had carried them there to destroy them: but his design was to teach them the necessity of prayer and faith and dependence upon himself; and blessed are they to whom the Lord now teaches the same lesson

* 1 Cor. x. 11.

son under the want of many things. But, in the spirit, this is the case of every man; for we are all brought after our baptism into a barren world, where we find no more to support that life which God promised to his people, than the Hebrews found in the wilderness. Here we *wander* (as the Psalmist figuratively describes the state of man) *hungry and thirsty, our souls fainting within us*, and depending upon God for his daily grace. The people were taught this in the wilderness by receiving their meat from day to day in a miraculous manner from heaven. It was mere *manna*, such as Moses gave, to those who looked no farther than their bodies; and they were consequently soon tired of it; but to those who received it in faith, it was the *bread of God which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world*. God in all ages has been the giver of that support which is necessary to all men, whether followers of Moses or followers of Christ*: and Hebrews, if they had souls to be saved, could no more live by *bread alone*, than Christians can. God therefore was pleased to take this way of teaching them that they could not: and the apostle seeing his intention, says, *they did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual*

* See John vi. 32.

spiritual drink ; for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.* There is not a more extraordinary sentence in the scripture than this before us—*that rock was Christ.* It is impossible to take the words literally, any more than those which Christ spake of the bread which he brake, and said, *this is my body.* A rock of stone in a desert could not be Christ in the literal sense ; and yet it must be so in some sense, because the apostle hath affirmed it. This sense is therefore figurative and spiritual ; as the bread, which is broken in the holy communion, is bread to the body, but Christ to the spirit. And as Christ was the invisible fountain of grace to the thirsting Israelites, communicating himself to them by the sacramental waters of a rock, so he still offers himself to us in the same capacity—*If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink †* ; that is, if any man, sensible of the drought and emptiness of his own nature, thirst after spiritual things, he shall be refreshed with grace, as the thirsty body is refreshed by the waters of a living spring. He discoursed to the same effect with the woman of Samaria by the side of a well to which she came to draw
water

* 1 Cor. x. 3, 4.

† John vii. 37.

water—*Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.*

But now, as this meat and drink in the wilderness were figures of Christ, so the people in their use of them are ensamples to us. God shewed them, that man is in want of some nourishment which nature and the common course of things cannot give him: therefore he fed them with manna *from heaven* and water from a *dry rock*. But many of them took no delight in this spiritual diet. Though they had seen the wonders of the red sea, yet they carried Egypt with them in their hearts into the wilderness, and were sorry that they had left it. He who reads of their *loathing that light bread*, and desiring to return to the bondage of Egypt for the gratification of their lusts, may wonder at their stupidity; who could see manna sent down from the heavens, and the stream of a river running miraculously through a dry desert, and not partake of them with thankfulness and devotion! But he will find, when he looks around him, that men are just such now as they were in the wilderness: carnal, inattentive, and worldly minded. Christians, called to a state of salvation, give the preference to that world which they renounced at their baptism, and bring it with

with

with them into the Christian profession; as the Hebrews brought Egypt with them into the wilderness. Whatever you think of the manna from heaven, and a springing well from a stone of flint, you have a greater miracle before your eyes daily. You have Christ come down to be the life of the world, and offering himself as the true manna in the blessed sacrament. You have his spirit and his word, as a water of life attending you in your way through this wilderness: but these spiritual blessings have their value with those only who are *spiritually minded*. Count the congregation of Christians in any parish, and see how few of that number attend the holy Communion: then you will discover, that Christians are sick of this Jewish distemper. As the wonders of the wilderness made no impression on those who were still affected to Egypt; so Christianity can offer nothing desirable to those whose hearts are full of the world. Where there is an attachment to fulness of feasting, excess of drinking, and to the other prospects, pleasures and profits of the world, there can be no spiritual appetite. To thirst after earthly and heavenly things at the same time, is as impossible as to serve God and Mammon. Can the man, who makes it his wish and his pleasure to be drunk, join with
the

the prophet and say—*Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O God. My soul is athirst for God, even the living God: when shall I come and appear before the presence of God?* Doth he not rather say, “let me never come near him, for I have
 “no relish for his ways or his worship. I wish
 “there were no church, no sacraments, no
 “preaching, no praying. I was baptized to be
 “a member of Christ, but I never desire to be
 “in his company. Let me continue to be one
 “of the swine of Egypt, as I have hitherto
 “been, and let my latter end be like theirs.”

Such is the language which passes in many hearts when it is put into plain English. Men are called by different names at distant periods of time; but the workings of their minds are the same in all ages. The devout Christian follows the calling of God at this day, on the same motives of faith as the Patriarchs did of old, and considers this life as a pilgrimage; while others are drawn away by the world and flesh just as they were whose carcasses fell in the wilderness. They were made examples to us, with this intention, as the apostle instructs us, *that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted* *. If we look to their history in the
 book

* 1 Cor. x. 6.

book of Numbers, we find how discontented and miserable they were under the way of life to which God had brought them: *The children of Israel wept again and said, who shall give us flesh to eat? It was well with us in Egypt, but now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all besides this manna before our eyes.* Then we read that God complied with their murmurings, and sent them meat to the full; but sent a plague after it, whereby many were destroyed; and the place received its name from the *graves* of those who were buried for their *lusts*.

Here the child of this world may see his own picture. It is his object to gratify himself at any rate, without considering the consequences. His Paradise is this Egypt: self-denial is a meagre doctrine, and there is nothing to be got, which he can relish, by the service of God. You will therefore see people as fretful and cross when devotion and self-denial come in their way, as the weeping Israelites, who complained that they were dried up with eating manna. And the consequence is as it was of old, *God is not well pleased* with them: and sooner or later, every man will feel the effect of setting God against him by his indifference and disaffection. Some have their punishment in that fulness which they have desired. Who amongst us cannot

cannot recollect many, who have died before their time, by following some ungoverned appetite ; and come to the same end, by the same means, as they who were buried at *Kibroth Hattaavah* ? If they live long to enjoy that for which they thought it worth their while to murmur against and despise the ways of God, they suffer miserably in another respect : as it is said in the Psalm, *he gave them their desire, and sent leanness withal into their soul* * : so that while their bodies were thriving their souls were starving. If it were possible to see the souls of some such people, they would look worse than skin and bone ; wasting and perishing for lack of that grace by which the inner man is renewed. He then who wishes to find death, misery, and the displeasure of God, which is worst of all, let him turn back from his Christian profession, and demand satisfaction for all his lusts. But let him who wishes to find Canaan at last, be content to find a wilderness in the way to it, and there take with thankfulness what God has appointed for him.

* Psalm cvi. 15.

LECTURE VII.

HISTORICAL FIGURES OF THE SCRIPTURES CONTINUED.

IN the preceding Lecture, we have seen how the dangers of the Christian warfare are set before us, in the history of the Militant State of the Jewish Church in its translation from Egypt to Canaan. St. *Paul* hath expressly taught us, to consider that history as prophetical of our own situation as Christians; and hath shewed how it is to be applied as an admonition or warning to us, that we may not *fall after the same example of unbelief*. We have seen how the people who had been baptized under Moses, and had passed through the Red Sea, afterwards preferred the slavery of Egypt to the ser-

vice of God in the wilderness ; becoming weary of his ways, and despising the better for love of the worse.

But we followed them only on a part of their journey. Other circumstances are yet behind, from which the like instruction is to be gathered : and in treating of them, I shall observe the same order as the Apostle hath done in the 10th chapter of his first Ep. to the Cor. where he warns us not to be *idolaters, as were some of them ; as it is written, the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.* This refers us to the occasion of their making a golden calf, and worshipping it with the riotous mirth of idolaters ; which shewed that they had forsaken the true object of their worship, and had forgotten the design of their redemption from the bondage of Egypt. While Moses was in conference with God upon the mount, their folly had taken up an opinion, that he would not return to them ; and consequently, that they might fall into licentiousness, without the fear of being called to an account : so they danced before a golden calf, and gave themselves up to eating and drinking and playing, as if they had totally forgotten the design of their journey through the wilderness. Are these the people whom God, with so mighty a hand,

had lately rescued from the tyranny of Pharaoh? Are these the people who had seen the waters of the sea divided, to save them and destroy their enemies? who had followed a cloud, which led them by day, and gave light to them by night? and had they so soon forgotten all these wonders, and fallen into the senseless mirth of idolatry? Strange it is! but such was the fact. And now let us observe the consequence. Moses, whom they had forgotten, descends from the mount when they little expected him; he surprises them in the midst of their sin, and sends the Levites, armed, as his ministers, to execute vengeance; who smote with the sword from one side of the camp to the other, and there fell some thousands of the people. Our Saviour, in one of his discourses, hath applied this history as an admonition to those careless sinners, who live in pleasure, and are unmindful of Him who will shortly return to be their Judge: *But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in sunder, and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.*

*lievers**. This brings the history home to ourselves. As Moses for a time left the people in the wilderness, so hath our Leader left us, and he is now up with God in the holy mount. In this interval, there are Christians (so called) who *wot not what is become of him*, and make a profane use of his absence; setting up this world, in some form or other, as their idol, and devoting themselves to the worship of it. Whatever the object may be, which any man has substituted in the place of God, that object is to him what the calf was to the Hebrews. How many are there who spend their lives in the dance of pleasure, as if they had been sent hither for no other purpose! others devote themselves to honours and preferments; and, to accomplish their designs, affect popularity, and worship *the beasts of the people*. Wealth is the object of others; and theirs is a calf of gold. The covetous serve mammon the God of riches; and the sin of *covetousness* is expressly called by the name of *Idolatry*†. Are these the people of God? Are these they, who were baptised into the

* Luke xii. 44.

† The learned Mr. *Parkhurst*, in his *Greek Lexicon* of the New Testament, gives very good reasons why we ought rather here to understand the sin of *unlawful lusts*, as in that other expression, *whose God is their belly*. See under the word *πλεονεξία*.

the name of Jesus Christ as *dead unto sin and alive unto righteousness*? Are these the children of Abraham; followers of them who through faith and patience obtained the promises?—Merciful God, what a transformation is this! Are they not rather of those unprofitable servants, whom the Lord at his return from the mount shall surprise and judge as hypocrites and unbelievers?

We have another example of our danger from the case of the Israelites, who fell into sin from evil communications and bad company. There was a *mixt multitude* of strolling Egyptians and disorderly people who went up with the Hebrews out of Egypt, and attended their camp from motives of curiosity or beggary. These are said to have *fallen a lusting*, and to have propagated their evil inclinations among the congregation; who, led by their example, provoked God with their discontent and murmurings. The Christian church hath always been attended by a like unprincipled multitude of heretics, sensualists, enthusiasts, sectaries, and even atheists; men, who being discontented with the ways and doctrines of the Christian society, have recommended and spread their own evil opinions, and occasioned multitudes to fall away. A defection from the doctrines of

Christianity is the natural consequence of a departure from the worship and sacraments and authority of the Church. Some of the earliest instances of blasphemy against the doctrine of the blessed Trinity, were found among ignorant people in those times of confusion and rebellion, when a mixt multitude of more than sixty different sects arose even to the astonishment of those who first began the separation *. But afterwards, the same error was adopted by men of higher pretensions to learning, who have found too many followers; till the times have at length produced a new generation of opinionists, who assume to themselves, and attribute to one another, the honours of confession and martyrdom, for asserting the blasphemy of Socinus against the church and the kingdom of Christ, with the same boldness as the saints, in the primitive times, asserted the doctrines of the gospel against the heathen powers and the kingdom of Satan. But boldness without truth will never make a Christian confessor: and if a man injures

* An authentic and very curious account of the errors and blasphemies of that time, (two years before the death of the king) was published in a Treatise entitled, *Gangræna*, by *Thomas Edwards*, Presbyterian minister; of which, see part. 1. p. 32. 110. But see also Burnet's Hist. of the Reformation, An. 1549. vol. 2. p. 111, 112.

injures himself for the love of error, he is not a martyr but a suicide.

They who are acquainted with the world, and the present state of religion and literature, must have observed, that heresy, schism, and the new philosophy of the Deists, with their numerous adherents, form a mixt multitude, which are always hovering about the Christian camp, and never fail to corrupt it. They are now boasting of their success, and threaten to overwhelm this church in a very short time with a deluge of Unitarianism, that is, of Mahometan infidelity*.

The destruction of three and twenty thousand was occasioned by the Israelites associating with the people of *Midian*, who invited them to the feasts of their idols; in consequence of which, they fell into shameless fornication after the manner of the Heathens. And as there were wicked Midianites and Moabites in the neighbourhood of the camp, so is there a wicked world always near at hand, ready to invite and seduce the servants of God by its ensnaring customs and diversions. To mix with the world on all occasions, and not be corrupted by its ways, is almost as unlikely, as that the Hebrews should go to an idol-feast with the Midianites,

L 4

and

and not be the worse for it. What is the natural tendency of many, and even the design of some public diversions tolerated among Christians; but to corrupt youth and give opportunities to vice? How are most of the scenes of public diversion crowded with the *daughters of Midian*, who are well aware, that what is there to be seen and heard will seldom fail to encourage the vicious, and betray some of the innocent into their snares! wherever any public meetings have this tendency to corrupt the manners, we may call them by what names we please, but they are as *Moab* and *Midian*, if they are the enemies of Christian virtue.

Balak, the king of the Moabites, hated the camp of Israel, and bribed *Balaam*, a prophet, to *curse* them. Just thus doth the world hate the church, and is never happier than when it can hire the ministers of the church to turn against it and betray its interests. But it can no more succeed by all its curses than the wicked *Balak* could: it must seduce Christians to *sin*, and then it prevails; not by its own power, but by tempting the church to provoke the anger of God. When *Balaam* found that he could prevail nothing by his sacrifices and enchantments, then he gave counsel to *Balak* to corrupt the people of the camp with fornication;

fornication; and that soon answered the purpose.

But now we are to learn another lesson, from the example of those who are said to have *tempted Christ* with their impatience under the ways of his providence. When the people expected to see an end of their journeyings, it pleased God still to lead them round about; but being weary of this unsettled life, we are told, that *the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way**: and, to punish their impatience on this occasion, fiery serpents were sent to destroy them. But when Moses prayed for them, he was directed to place a serpent on a pole †, and when they who were bitten looked up to it, they were saved from death. Our Saviour hath applied this to the lifting up of himself upon the cross, where the serpent that hath the power of death, was to be vanquished; that they who are wounded by sin, and in danger of eternal death, may look up to him and live. What was the offence of the people? It was impatience. What was their punishment? they were delivered to the power of the destroyer. What was the remedy? They were directed

* Numbers xxi. 4.

† In the heathen Mythology, a serpent, twisted about a stick, is the emblem of health, and the ensign of *Esculapius*.

directed to look up to a figure of the cross. And where should the impatient now look up, but to Jesus the author and finisher of their faith; that great example of patient suffering, who for their sakes endured the cross, and despised the shame of it. If we are tempted to *be weary and faint in our minds*, when the Providence of God is leading us by some tedious and disagreeable way against our will, then we are to look up to this pattern of patience, and to consider, how he took the painful way of the cross, and submitted his own will to the will of God. With this example before us, let us ask ourselves whether we have any thing to complain of; we who ought to have been there instead of him! In his death we see the victory that overcometh the world. For the joy that was set before him, he waited till the great work of our salvation was finished: and we are to wait in like manner, till all the designs of Providence are accomplished in us; for we can inherit the promises on no other condition: *he that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved.*

But salvation, such as God hath promised, is not an object to all men. Some have no opinion of it; as there were those amongst the people in the wilderness, who *thought scorn of that pleasant*

pleasant land to which they were going. When the spies who were sent to view the land of Canaan made their report of it, and brought back with them some of its fruits, they differed very much in their accounts. They who proved faithful and told the truth, said it was an exceeding good land, flowing with milk and honey; and that they were well able, with God on their side, to take possession of it, and overcome the inhabitants, whose *defence was departed from them*. Others brought up an *evil report of the land which they had searched*: they described it as a land which ate up, that is, starved its inhabitants; and that these were men of a gigantic stature, to whom ordinary men were but as grasshoppers. This latter report found too much credit: and the congregation was so discouraged and terrified by it, that they *lift up their voices and wept*; and they murmured against Moses and Aaron for bringing them into these insuperable difficulties, and even determined to make them another captain and go back. This is the act of unbelief for which they were doomed to fall in the wilderness, without being permitted to see that land which they would take no pains to win.

Such is the case of those fearful minds and
faint

faint hearts, which say *there is a lion in the way*, and magnify all the difficulties of the Christian warfare. The heavenly land, as they conceive of it, and as they hear from people like themselves, is not a place that would make them happy. Besides there are such temptations in the way as no man can resist. Vice is strong, and nature is weak. The gospel prescribes a way of life that would starve people, and take away all their comfort. Therefore when all things are considered, nothing is to be done, but to give up the cause, and go back to the opinions and ways of the children of this world.

If I may give you my own sentiment, I do not suppose there is a sin upon earth more hateful to God, than this of undervaluing his promises, distrusting his protection, and making unjust representations either of his religion itself, or of the rewards of it; as if his service were hard, or the end of it not worth attaining. This I can tell you, that such people are often made more miserable, and suffer worse agitations of mind from disappointments in the way of their own chusing, than the most abstracted saint ever suffered from the practice of self-denial in the way of godliness. For we may lay it down as a certain rule, that they who have
not

not faith to see the value of the other world, have not the wit to use this properly : and no man need wish his worst enemy more wretched than the abuse of this world will make him. But, on the contrary, what words can describe the blessedness of him, who depending on the promises of God, conquers the difficulties of life, and hath *hope in his death* ! such an hope as is signified by the divine Psalmist, in words much to our present purpose—*I should utterly have fainted, but that I believe verily to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.* As if he had said, “ I believe the report concerning that good land, to the possession of which
 “ we are journeying ; I know the value of it,
 “ and that the Lord himself is my defence by
 “ the way ; and so my heart hath not failed
 “ me : therefore I give the same advice to all ;
 “ *wait on the Lord ; be of good courage, and he*
 “ *shall strengthen thine heart* : he who led
 “ Joshua to victory in the promised land, shall
 “ bring down the walls of the mighty, and support thee against all that appears gigantic
 “ and terrible in the way of thy salvation.” St. Paul, having pointed out to us, and applied all these figures as examples to us under the gospel, draws this weighty moral from the history of our fathers who journeyed in the wilderness :
where-

“wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth
 “take heed lest he fall. There hath no temp-
 “tation taken you, but such as is common to
 “man: but God is faithful who will not suffer
 “you to be tempted above that ye are able, but
 “will, with the temptation also, make a way to
 “escape that ye may be able to bear it*.” This
 is the doctrine we are to learn from their history.
 He that standeth may now fall through unbe-
 lief, as they did: he that has been brought out
 of Egypt, may fall in the wilderness; therefore
 let us *pass the time of our sojourning here in*
fear. But then, as God is still with us, we are
 never to be discouraged in the time of trial, nor
 to doubt of his protection. If there is a sea
 on one side, and a host of Egyptians on the
 other, and there seems *no way to escape*, the
 waters shall be divided and the Egyptians shall
 be overthrown. If there is neither bread nor
 water in appearance, some improbable causes
 shall give us a supply of both: some flinty
 stone shall become a springing well, and the
 heavens above shall give us meat enough.
 Then for the sicknesses of the soul, we have
 the remedy of the cross; and against the gi-
 gantic race of Anak, a defender who will never
 leave us nor forsake us: howsoever great and
 formidable

* 1 Cor. x. 12, 13.

formidable the enemies of the Christian may appear, *Greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world.*

Though it is the design of these lectures rather to interpret the scripture than to apply it; yet we are to consider the application as the end, and the interpretation as the means: therefore I cannot help indulging myself sometimes in dwelling upon the moral part, which is the most edifying of all. The history of the church in the wilderness is figurative, and we have learned what it signifies: but what good will this knowledge do us, if there is no counsel with it? What shall we gain by seeing how men were lost, unless we take advice from thence and learn how we may be saved? I therefore do not spare, when occasion offers, to add to my interpretations such spiritual advice as arises out of them. The length and labour of my undertaking is the greater upon this account; but I hope your profit will be greater in proportion. The church that went from Egypt to Canaan gives us an example of every thing that can happen to the Christian Church from the beginning of it even to the end of the world: therefore no historical figure of the scripture is of more importance to us than this journey of the Hebrews through the wilderness:

ness : and I ought not yet to lay it aside. For there are two particulars remaining, which are of great signification : the one is the rebellion of *Corah*, and the other is the settlement of the church in *Canaan*, a land of the *Gentiles*.

St. *Jude*, in his epistle concerning the corruption of the church, speaks of some who *perished in the gainsaying of Core* : therefore this same evil which happened in the church of *Moses*, is to be found in the church of *Christ*, and it behoves us to consider what it was. *Corah* and his company had no dispute about the object or form of divine worship : they questioned none of the doctrines of the law ; they rose up against the persons of *Moses* and *Aaron* ; that is against the civil and ecclesiastical authority ; contending that themselves and all the congregation had an equal right ; that *Moses* and *Aaron* had taken too much upon themselves ; and by exercising an usurped authority were abusing and making fools of the people. This was their sin, and they maintained it to the last, and perished in it. It was the dispute of popular power against divine authority : and wherever the like pretensions are avowed by Christians, and the same arguments used in support of them, there we see the *gainsaying of Corah*. It is a lamentable circum-

circumstance attending this sin, that it inspires great boldness and obstinacy, such as we read of in *Corah* and his party. Other sinners are apt to be ashamed of themselves; but these never; because they assert their own sanctity in the act of their disobedience. When they set up human right against that which is by God's appointment; the more proud and obstinate they are, the more colour they seem to give to their pretensions. It is one reason why rebellion was so severely punished in *Corah*, and is now so severely threatened in the New Testament that men are never known to repent of it. In vain did Moses exclaim and remonstrate against the wickedness of *Corah*: he and all his party preserved the same good opinion of themselves, and persisted in it to the last; even appealing to God himself, though they were risen up against God's ministers; till the earth opened; and the fire devoured them.

From this example of *Corah*, we are to learn, that God considers all opposition against lawful authority, as a sin against himself. He declares that *rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry**: the meaning of which, as it stands in the book of *Samuel*, is this; that if a man were a Jew, and

yet a rebel, he might as well be an heathen : if he were too stubborn to submit to the ordinances of God, he might as well be a sorcerer, or serve idols. And it is worthy of observation, that this severe sentence is against *Saul*, a king, who usurped the authority of the priesthood, and pleaded a godly reason for it. But so jealous is God, for the wisest ends, upon this subject, that no dignity of person, no appearance of reason, is admitted in excuse for the sin of rebellion. We therefore rightly pray in the Liturgy of the church of England, that God would deliver us from rebellion in the state and schism in the church ; and in order to this, we should also pray, that he would deliver us from the principles out of which they proceed ; for none of our reasonings will prevail in this case. For my own part, I must confess, that if there be any man who is so far infatuated as to have persuaded himself that God is no proprietor of power in the world of his own making and governing, and that all men are born to a state of equality ; I would no more reason with that man, than I would preach temperance to a swine, or honesty to a wolf. I would leave him to himself, and turn toward those who have not yet received the infection.

The

The settlement of the church of the Hebrews in Canaan, a land of the Heathens, is the last article I am to explain, as prefigurative of the Christian church. It is mentioned as such in the apology of St. Stephen against the Jews: *Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus (i. e. Joshua) into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers.* The doctrine of all others most unacceptable and odious to a Jew was this of the translation of the tabernacle of God to the Gentiles. St. Stephen therefore does not literally affirm it, but covertly, and as a prophet should do, under the shadow of that antient history which was intended to foreshew it. The Jewish church derived much danger from its situation among the Canaanites; for though God had driven them out as possessors, and established his own people in their land, he left some of the former possessors to be thorns in their sides for trial and punishment: and their history shews how often they were ensnared by the abominable doctrines of idolatry, 'till the captivity of Babylon was the reward of their apostacy.

Wonderful was the settlement of the Jews

in Canaan, with the fall of Jericho, and the victories of the people of God against all the armaments and confederacies of their enemies. But not less wonderful was the establishment of Christianity amongst the Gentiles. Heathenism was in as full and as quiet possession of the world and its empire at the coming of Christ, as the Canaanites were in their own land when Joshua entered it. But the voice of the gospel preached by a few fishermen from among the Jews, a people held in the utmost contempt by the whole heathen world, soon cast down all the highest fences of Satan's kingdom, as the walls of Jericho fell down at the sound of rams horns blown by priests. As the Hebrews in the progress of their victories were exhorted to fear nothing, remembering how Pharaoh had been subdued in Egypt; so ought Christians to remember daily, how God reduced the power of Satan all over the heathen world, till his temples were destroyed, and the churches of Christ were placed upon their ruins.

But then, as there was a remnant of the Canaanites, to whom the people were frequently joining themselves in marriage, and consequently relapsing into idolatry, according to that of the Psalmist—*They did not destroy the nations concerning whom the Lord commanded them,*

them, but were mingled among the heathen and learned their works, and they served their idols, which were a snare unto them : so the works of heathen authors, with the fables of their false gods, the abominable rites of their religion, and the obscenity and immorality of their practices, are in like manner remaining among Christians ; and it has been the custom for ages, all over Europe, to communicate the rudiments of languages and learning to young minds from heathen books, without due care to caution them against imbibing heathen principles ; by which thousands of minds are corrupted, and through early prejudice rendered incapable of understanding the value of truth, and the abominable nature of heathen error. How frequently are heathen moralists applied to, when the finest rules of human prudence for the conduct of life are to be found in the scripture. But to go to the heathens for divinity, as some authors do, is intolerable. They blow out the candle of revelation, and then go raking into the embers of paganism to light it again. Many good and learned men, of the first ability and taste, have observed and lamented the bondage we are under to heathen modes of education ; but custom is a tyrant which hears no reason. However, there

can be no harm, and I hope there will be no offence, in praying that God will enable us to correct all our errors from the history of past miscarriages. This is the great use we are to make of our present subject. The dangers to the souls of men are the same in all ages ; and their errors are the same for sense, however they may differ in form : so that we cannot be surprised and ensnared by any temptation that comes upon the church, if we look to the things that are past.

LECTURE VIII.

ON THE PERSONAL FIGURES, OR TYPES, OF
THE SCRIPTURES; PARTICULARLY THOSE
OF MOSES AND JOSEPH, PROPOSED BY ST.
STEPHEN, IN HIS APOLOGY TO THE JEWS.

THE Scripture would have supplied us with much more matter, of the same kind with that in the two preceding lectures. I might have set before you the history of *Gideon's* victory, and the fall of *Sisera*; which were signs of the spiritual victories of the church over the enemies of her salvation *. I might have considered the rejection of the Jews, as it was prefigured in the histories of *Cain* and *Abel*, of *Jacob* and *Esau*, of *Isaac* and *Ishmael*, of *Ephraim* and *Manasses*: to which I have ad-

M 4

ded

* See Isaiah ix. 4. Psalm lxxxiii. 9.

ded a view of their present state, as signified by the fall of the proud *Nebuchadnezzar*, and his temporary banishment amongst the beasts in a state of insanity, till the times of judgment passed over him. The grace of God to the *heathen* world, in admitting them to the salvation of the gospel, might have been exemplified by the healing of *Naaman* the *Syrian*, and the visitation of the widow of *Sarepta*: which two cases our Saviour pointed out to the Jews at Nazareth; but they would not bear the most distant hint of the reception of the Gentiles; and were so filled with wrath, that they would have thrown him down headlong from the brow of an hill, (after the Roman fashion) as an enemy to his country; for so were traitors punished at *Rome*, by being thrown from the top of the *Tarpeian* Rock.

Many figures are to be found in the occurrences and circumstantial of the history of the gospel by those who read it with such an intention. In short, the history of the Old and New Testaments hath a secondary or prophetic sense in many instances: its great events were signs and figures of *things not seen as yet*; and many of them are in force as such to this hour. Great things are still to be expected, of which we can form no conception, but as they are set before

us in the figures of the sacred history. God shall descend, and the earth be on fire, and the trumpet shall sound, and the tribes of mankind shall be assembled; as formerly at *Horeb*. Distress shall come upon a wicked world, when its iniquity shall be full, as once upon *Babylon*, and afterwards upon the apostate *Jerusalem*. The armies of the Lord shall encompass it; and it shall be overthrown, with them that dwell therein. For this reason, the visitation of Jerusalem was foretold in such terms by our Blessed Lord, that in many of his expressions it is hard to distinguish, whether that, or the end of the world, is to be understood.

These things, however, I must at present leave to your meditation, and go forward to the figurative histories of *individual persons*; such as were the prophets, kings, heroes, and saints of the old testament; who by their actions, as well as their words, *foreshewed the coming* of that Saviour, in whom the saint made perfect through sufferings, the conqueror, the prince, the priest, and the prophet, were to be united. As the things which befell the church at large, happened to them for ensamples to the whole congregation of Christian people; so the things which befell the prophets of old happened for ensamples of the Saviour himself; that his character

racter and history, as the true Son of God who should come into the world, might be infallibly ascertained and demonstrated, by a comparison with the various characters of those who had been most eminent in the church of old. Some of these characters were extremely different from others, and the events of their history very unlike ; but the character and history of the Messiah was to comprehend them all. For this end their lives were purposely conformed by the divine Providence to the image of him that was to come after.

This consideration, when we see the force of it, will reconcile us to some strange things, which might appear very unreasonable, if they were to be considered only in themselves, not under the relation which they bear, and were intended to bear to higher and greater things. How monstrous would it seem in any other history, that a man should be buried in the body of a fish, and cast up alive again after three days upon the dry land ! But if this strange thing happened, that it might afterwards be compared with the return of Jesus Christ from the dead, for the salvation of all mankind ; then the preservation of *Jonah* becomes fit and reasonable ; it being of infinite consequence to the world, that the fact of Christ's resurrection, when it should
happen,

happen, should be admitted and believed ; and so the case was worthy of the divine interposition. *Jonah* was not preserved by a miracle for his *own sake*, but for a *sign*, to instruct the people of God in the truth of their salvation and the peculiar means or mode of it. Two strange events of the same kind are more credible than one ; because the objection is removed which might arise from the singularity of the case. The resurrection of Christ is a true fact, and a credible fact : for why ? it was fore-shewn by the preservation of *Jonah* ; another fact of the same kind. And again, to take the matter the other way ; the preservation of *Jonah* was a miracle, worthy of God, from its *relation* to the *resurrection of Christ* ; the most important fact in itself, and the most necessary to be believed, of all that should ever happen from the beginning of the world to the end of it. *Jonah's* deliverance was intended to do what the apostles were sent over the world to do, *viz.* to witness the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our Saviour himself hath directed us to make this use of *Jonah's* history. The Jews required of him some miraculous fact as a testimony that he was the true Messiah : and he gave them this : *as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly ; so shall the son of man*

man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth *. Here the person of Jonah is a sign of the person of Christ, and the belly of a devouring fish a sign of the power of the grave, by which he should be detained for the same time as Jonah was.

The lives of the other prophets had a like relation to the times and transactions of the gospel. From a passage which is taken out of the 41st Psalm, and applied to the treason of Judas ; it appears that some of the most remarkable circumstances in the life of the prophet David were prefigurative of other parallel circumstances in the life of Christ. It is observed by our Saviour himself, that in the treason of Judas, that *scripture was fulfilled*, which saith, *he that eateth bread with me hath lift up his heel against me*. The familiar friend of David, whose treachery is here complained of, was *Achitophel*, to whom these words, in the letter of them, must be supposed to have referred : but if they were *fulfilled*, as our Saviour saith, *in Judas*, then they were prophetical ; and the suffering of David from a traitor, fore-shewed that the true David should be a sufferer from a person of the same character. Achitophel, a man entrusted with the chief management

* Matt. xii. 39, 40.

ment of David's affairs, took part against his master, and betrayed him to those who sought his life : and Judas in like manner, being first entrusted by his master, betrayed him to the chief priest, that he might be put to death. But now let us mark the sequel ; for both these traitors came to the same tragical end ; they both *hanged themselves*, when they failed of the success which their ambition aimed at : and if Judas had studied the scripture as much as he studied the world, he might have foreseen his own fate in that of his brother traitor Achitophel. Unless the character of David, as a prophet, had a relation to the person of Christ, how can we account for it, that the name of *David* is applied to him by *Ezekiel* * four hundred years after the natural David was dead ? On what other principle could David speak such words in the 16th Psalm, as could be verified only in the person of Christ ? *Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption.* Concerning this passage St. Peter argued with the Jews, that it could not be meant of David himself, the memorials of whose death and burial were still remaining among them. That the Providence of God did exhibit in the person of David a character prefigurative

* *Ezekiel* xxxvii. 25.

prefigurative of the Messiah, can never be doubted if we compare their characters together: both were shepherds, prophets, kings and conquerors; both were despised and set at nought by their brethren; oppressed and persecuted by the powerful; ungratefully reviled, mocked at, and betrayed, by rebels and traitors; and both were raised to the throne of Israel (called the *throne of David*) in opposition to all the power and malice of their enemies. From this similitude of character, all men might infallibly distinguish the true son of David, when he should have fulfilled his course, and attained the kingdom on the holy hill of Sion.

In the prophet *Elijah*, we have a character prefigurative of the person and office of *John the Baptist*: whence it is said in the 4th chap. of Malachi, *behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, &c.* The scribes and pharisees, who took this passage literally, expected that the prophet *Elijah* (whom the New Testament calls *Elías*) would appear *in person* before the coming of the Messiah, and therefore, at the crucifixion, they observed of Jesus with a sneer, that though he
had

had not as yet received any testimony from Elias, he might do so, even upon the cross, if they did but give him a little more time—*Let be*, said they, *let us see whether Elias will come to save him**. By those whose minds were enlightened, it had been understood, not that the person of *Elijah* should come again, but the character; that the *spirit* and *power* † of that prophet should be revived and fulfilled in the character of the Baptist. Let us therefore compare them together. As to their personal appearance, we read that *Elijah the Tishbite was an hairy man* ‡ (probably with a rough garment) *and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins*. And do we not read of *John the Baptist* his counterpart, that he also had *his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins*? With respect to their manner of life, *Elijah* frequented the wilderness, and was fed in solitude: and *John the Baptist was in the deserts, and came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and his meat was locusts and wild honey*, proper to a man of a contemplative and holy life. In their office and ministry, which give importance to the other marks of their character, both of them were raised up for the great work of *reforming a degenerate people*,

* Matthew xxvii. 49. † Luke i. 17. ‡ 1 Kings xix. 4.

people, and turning to God those who had departed from him. Elijah brought over to Jehovah thousands of the people who had revolted to Baal: and John the Baptist warned a generation of vipers to flee from the wrath to come; and prevailed upon them to receive that *baptism of repentance* which was preparatory to the baptism of the gospel. Elijah bore his testimony without fear against two kings, *Ahab* and *Ahaziah*; one of whom was urged on by that wicked woman *Jezebel*, who had determined to put that prophet to death. So did John boldly rebuke *Herod*, a king under the influence of another wicked woman, who sought his life and succeeded. Thus we understand how far these two were alike in their persons, their manners, and their ministry; and with what propriety it was said of John by the angel, that he should go before the Lord God of Israel *in the spirit and power of Elias*. There is something very remarkable to our present purpose in the testimony our Saviour gave to John, as being the person in whom the character of Elias was fulfilled: *I say unto you that Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatever they listed as it is written of him* *. These last words plainly refer us to what

* Mark ix 13.

what was written of Elijah; from whose history it might be foreseen, what would become of John the Baptist; namely, that a wicked and powerful woman should thirst after his blood, and that a king should send his officers to take away his life. This was what they *listed to do* against *Elijah*: therefore when Herodias persecuted the Baptist, and Herod sent an executioner to behead him, they acted according *as it was written*. Elijah was miraculously preserved to be carried up alive into heaven: whereto John followed him, in a way more agreeable to the spirit of the Gospel, the way of martyrdom*.

We find another figurative character in the person of Isaac the son of Abraham, whose sacrifice and deliverance were descriptive of Christ's death and resurrection. *Abraham*, says the apostle, *offered up Isaac, accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure*†. The history of this transaction informs us, that *on the third day* Abraham lift

VOL. IV.

N

up

* If the reader should be pleased with what is here said, he will be much more pleased with *Considerations on the Life and Death of John the Baptist*, by Dr. Horne, the present D of Canterbury.

† Hebrews xi. 19.

up his eyes, and saw the place where his son was to be offered up. He *laid upon* Isaac the wood on which he was to suffer, as Christ carried his own cross: and when the knife was lifted up to slay him, the angel of the Lord interposed, and Isaac was received, as it were, from the dead; having been actually devoted to death in the mind of his father for *three days*. In his substitute the ram, a real sacrifice was offered, as Abraham had expected, and Isaac was still alive; so that in the one we have a figure of the death of Christ, in the other of his resurrection. And to render this transaction more descriptive, the providence of God directed Abraham on this occasion to the *mountains of Moriah*, where the temple of Jerusalem was afterwards built; in which the lamb Christ Jesus was daily offered up for many hundred years in the sacrifices of the law; and where Christ himself at length suffered; accomplishing all the offerings of the law, and fulfilling the sacrifice and figurative resurrection of Isaac. The 11th chapter * of the epistle

* A learned Dignitary of this Church, who is *mighty in the scriptures*, hath composed a series of discourses, equally excellent and edifying, upon the several characters of the faithful in this chapter; which I hope he will not forget to publish in due time.

epistle to the Hebrews, in which the history of Isaac is treated of, would afford us many other examples of illustrious persons whose actions and sufferings were conformed to the character of that Saviour in whom they believed. But of all the personal histories which have a prophetic relation to the sufferings and exaltation of Jesus Christ, none are so full to the purpose as those two characters of *Joseph* and *Moses*, which were selected by the blessed martyr St. *Stephen* in his apology against the Jews: which apology, when rightly considered, opens a wonderful scene, and carries us very far into the prophetical imagery of the scripture. St. *Stephen*, in his disputes with the adversaries of the gospel, had argued in such a manner from the figures of the Old Testament, to vindicate the sufferings and demonstrate the verity of the mission of Jesus Christ, that none could *resist the wisdom and the spirit with which he spake* *. And at length, in his speech, before the high priest at his trial, we have the method and substance of his reasoning: of which I am now to make my use, so far as it relates to the present part of our subject. The design of this discourse, and the drift of

* See Acts, chap. vi. 7.

the argument may be collected by comparing some passages of it together.

Having reminded the Jews, in the first place *, that the promises of God, and the hopes of the fathers, did not rest in a temporal or worldly inheritance, as they had falsely flattered themselves; he lays down the histories of *Joseph* and *Moses*, with the persecutions they underwent from their people, and the interposition of God for their exaltation: and then, to shew his *meaning* in all this, he makes the following application, for the conviction of his hearers, who had been the persecutors of Jesus Christ. “Ye stiff necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears (who from your disobedience are not able to hear and understand what the law has declared to you) ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just one, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers †.” This application shews with what design he had reminded them of the reception which *Joseph* and *Moses*, those two eminent

* See the beginning of the 7th chapter of the *Acts*.

† *Acts* vii. 51.

nent characters of the law, had met with. He meant to shew them, that as these favourites of heaven, whom God had commissioned to be the Saviours of their people, were opposed and persecuted ; so had they now, in like form and manner, opposed and persecuted the Just one Jesus Christ ; and in so doing had fulfilled the scripture, and done all that was wanting to confirm the truth of his divine mission ; inasmuch as none could be the true Saviour, according to the scriptures, but a person rejected by them, as these holy prophets had been rejected by their forefathers.

Such is the purport of St. *Stephen's* apology ; and, with this key, we are prepared to examine the particulars. He enters on the character of Joseph with these remarkable words : *the patriarchs moved with envy sold Joseph into Egypt.* Who were the enemies of Joseph ?—The patriarchs ; his *own brethren*, all against him to a man. Having first plotted together to take away his life, they *sold* him, and then shewed the marks of his *blood*, that his father might be assured he was dead. The strangers, to whom he was given up, carried him far from his family, and placed him among heathens in the land of Egypt. All these particulars were

exactly verified in the person of Christ: his *brethren moved with envy sold him for money*, and delivered him to the Gentiles. The brother who advised * the selling of Joseph, that some *profit* might be made of him, was *Judah*, who answers even in his name to the traitor that sold Jesus Christ: but the guilt which attends his name extends to the whole nation of the Jews, of whom Judah among the twelve patriarchs, and Judas among the twelve apostles, were the representatives. *Envy* was the motive on which the patriarchs sold Joseph; and Christ was accused and condemned on the same principle, according to the opinion of his judge; of whom two of the evangelists relate, that Pilate knew the chief priests had delivered him *for envy*. When Joseph declared his dreams, which signified his future superiority over his whole family; his brethren hated him yet the more for his dreams and for his words; and persuaded themselves they should prevent his advancement by selling him for a slave: but this was the circumstance without which his advancement could not have happened: he had never been a ruler and a prince, if he had not been sent into Egypt as a slave, and to prison

as

* See Gen. xxxvii. 26.

as a malefactor. So when Christ asserted his own dignity, his brethren took up stones to cast at him for making himself the Son of God : and when he told them they should see him coming in the clouds, and sitting at the right hand of power, they pronounced him to be guilty of blasphemy, and inflicted those sufferings which were necessary to his exaltation. They sold him into the hands of the Romans, to be treated as a *slave, scourged, and crucified*. With the kingdoms of the Gentiles, to whom his brethren delivered him, he remains to this day ; and thither they must come after him, if they are to meet with him, as Joseph was followed by his family into Egypt.

Much more might be said to shew how exact the parallel is between the history of Joseph and the history of Christ, if we were to pursue it. We see Joseph in company with two malefactors in the prison, and promising life to one of them : we see him endued with such *wisdom*, that even Heathens were obliged to own that this Hebrew spoke by the spirit of God ; and they were content that he should receive the power and glory of dominion amongst them ; while his brethren had rejected him as an insignificant dreamer. One circumstance, however, I must not pass over, which is

particularly noted by St. Stephen ; that *at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren*. At the first meeting they knew him not : but after they had accused themselves for being guilty of his death, and had imputed their troubles to its proper cause, then their brother was made known unto them. Thus we trust it will be at last betwixt Christ and the Jews. The time will come, when they shall see the true reason why they had been wandering backwards and forwards, and seeking their bread with anxiety and suspicion, in a strange land ; and shall say with the brethren of Joseph, *we are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear ; therefore is this distress come upon us**. God who found out the iniquity of Joseph's brethren, and at last opened their eyes to see and confess it, can turn the hearts of the Jews, how hard soever they may be at present, and prepare them for that second meeting when their Saviour shall be known to them.

Some things which have passed before us in the present lecture would suggest many profitable reflections, if I had time to insist upon them.

From

* Genesis xlii. 21.

From the office of John the Baptist, which was preparatory to the doctrines of Jesus Christ, we are to learn, that no man can receive the truth of the gospel, unless he is prepared by a *baptism of repentance*, and is ready to forsake his sins. The counsel of God for his salvation can take no effect, till his former evil ways are given up. With an attachment to his old sins and errors, he can neither understand nor approve any thing the gospel offers to him; but will either hate or despise it, and tempt others to do the same: as the scribes did, who would not accept of John's baptism. Why do not all men receive the gospel, but because some have taken part with the world, the flesh, and the devil; and determine never to renounce them? To all such the gospel is a thing of no value.

From the case of Joseph, and our blessed Saviour, hated and persecuted as they were, we should learn to *suspect* all those whom the world *magnifies*, and not trust to reports and appearances, where self love and temporal interest are concerned to disguise things. This is a world in which truth is neglected, goodness evil spoken of, and innocence run down and persecuted. It is the constant practice of mankind to misrepresent and defame those whom they have injured, that their own injustice may not appear.

appear. When virtue is oppressed, it is generally silent ; while its oppressors never fail to be clamorous in their own vindication : and in most cases, men may distinguish where the fault lies, by the noise that is made to conceal it. When Christ was defamed he *answered not again* ; and his disciples also suffered in patience ; while the Jews were running here and there all over the world to tell their story, and turn the hearts of men against the gospel, that they might be prepared to disbelieve and reject it, as soon as it should come to their ears.

In the history of Joseph's brethren, you see them in distress under their wants ; not able to stay at home without starving, nor daring to go into Egypt, taking the lord of the country for their enemy. Every mortal man will suffer under the like miserable dilemma, who cannot find his happiness in the world, and dare not seek it where only it is to be found. All this happens because he does not know Jesus Christ ; does not know that he is the brother and the friend of sinners, ready to take them under his protection and supply all their wants ; but supposes religion to be his enemy, and expects to be roughly handled. The brethren of Joseph did not know him ; and were distressed with fear and anxiety ; the Jews did not know Christ,

Christ, and are to this day wandering, restless, and hopeless about the world ; and every man will find himself in the like condition, till he discovers that the religion he is afraid of is his best friend, and that God has sent a Saviour before us to *preserve life, not to destroy it.*

LECTURE IX.

ON THE PERSONAL FIGURES, OR TYPES, OF
THE SCRIPTURE.

(A CONTINUATION OF THE FORMER.)

OF all the personal figures of the Old Testament, none are so proper to answer the purpose of these lectures, as the two characters which St. Stephen proposed to the Jews, as figures and fore-runners of Jesus Christ ; whom they would not have crucified if they had known him, and they could not have failed to know him, if they had looked to those saints of old who had fore-shewed him in their lives and actions, more plainly than words could have described him.

Notice had been given of this by Moses himself ; so that they ought not to have been ignorant.

rant. *A prophet, said he, shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me :* which words are cited by St. Stephen and marked out for special observation: *This is that Moses, who said unto the children of Israel, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, like unto me :* and from the use he has made of the history of Moses, in the 7th chapter of *the Acts*, it appears that this likeness extends to his whole character, from his birth to his death : as we shall see when we come to examine the particulars. We are likewise taught by St. *Paul*, that Moses, as a minister and mediator, was faithful in his office, *for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after :* when the Son himself, the great and final mediator, should take the direction of the house of God, and accomplish the ministry, which is now *witnessed* by the ministry of Moses.

The circumstances fittest for our purpose in the history of Moses, and most remarkable in themselves, are already selected by St. Stephen : to these, therefore, I shall confine myself ; and treat of them in the order in which he has laid them down. But that we may first have a distinct view of the particulars, which will come under consideration, it may be proper to observe ;

serve; that the history of Moses, as here to be applied, comprehends 1. The circumstances of his *birth*. 2. His qualifications and endowments as the *minister of God*. 3. His office as the *deliverer* of his people. 4. The *reception* he met with from the people he came to *deliver*.

Our blessed Saviour's birth in Judæa was rendered very remarkable by the circumstances that attended it, and the character of the time in which it happened.

When the promises of God were about to be fulfilled by the redemption of mankind, and the time foretold by the prophets was drawing near; the nation of the Jews was fallen under bondage to the Roman power, and were subject to Herod, a strange king, jealous of the people he was set over, and apprehensive of a deliverer to be born among themselves. When the report of Christ's birth was brought by the wise men, Herod determined to cut him off; and with this view cruelly slaughtered all the infants in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem. With all this the birth of Moses agrees in every circumstance.

For 1. *The time of the promise drew nigh which God had sworn to Abraham.* It had been foretold, that the seed of Abraham should continue
four

four hundred years in Egypt, and after that come out with great substance. When this time of redemption was approaching, the Hebrews were fallen into great affliction under a new king *who knew not Joseph*; who being probably an alien, had no respect to the merits or memory of him who had been a saviour to the land of Egypt; looking with a jealous eye upon all his people, as enemies, and treating them as captives and slaves. He had a suspicion that they would become more powerful, and get them up out of his land. To prevent which, he proceeded with subtilty, (as *Herod* did afterwards) and resolved upon a massacre of all the male infants of the Hebrews. He first commanded the midwives to kill them; but failing in this, *Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, every son that is born ye shall cast into the river.* At this time *Moses* was born: and a remarkable time it was: a strange new king kept the people of God in subjection, and murdered their infants, to prevent their deliverance. But *Moses* and *Christ*, under these wonderful circumstances, were both miraculously preserved, to accomplish the redemption for which they were raised up: and they were both preserved in the land of *Egypt*. *Moses* was taken up by *Pharaoh's* daughter, and escaped

caped from the wrath of a cruel king: and the child Jesus was carried into Egypt by his parents to escape the wrath of Herod.

The nativity of Christ was dignified by the appearance of a star, and celebrated by an host of angels; though its earthly appearance was in poverty and obscurity. And some unusual circumstances marked the birth of Moses, though the particulars are not related. He was born of a poor oppressed people, the child of a slave, and doomed to death by the circumstances of his birth. But his parents were aware of some distinction, which shewed that he was raised up for some great purpose. St. Paul says, *they saw he was a proper child*; St. Stephen, that he was *exceeding fair*; the original is, *fair to God*; from all which it is most reasonable to understand, that some marks of divine favour and distinction were visible about him at his birth. His qualifications and endowments come next under consideration.

He is said to have been *learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians* *, and to have been *mighty in words and in deeds*. This character is given of Christ as a prophet, nearly in the same terms. The two disciples who walked with him to Emmaus described him as *a prophet mighty*

* Compare Luke ii. 52.

mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. When Moses was grown up, he went forth to vindicate the rights of his people, and gave them a sign of his power by slaying an Egyptian who did them wrong; casting out one of their strong men, to shew that a stronger than he was come upon him, and that God had visited his people. So did Christ give a sign of his power as a redeemer, by rescuing the souls and bodies of men from the bondage of Satan: casting out devils by the finger of God, to shew that the kingdom of God was come upon them.

The Egyptian wisdom, according to the accounts we have of it, delivered all things under signs and figures; speaking to the mind rather by visible objects than by words, and conveying instruction under a hidden form which only the wise could understand. I do not stay to enquire into the reason of this; I only speak of the fact, which is well known to scholars. Moses must therefore have been accustomed early to this mode of delivering science by symbols and hieroglyphics: and we have seen that his whole law is according to the same method, not speaking literally of any spiritual thing, not even of the immortality of the soul (whence some have ignorantly supposed that it was not

a doctrine of his law) but delivering all things under signs, emblems and descriptive ceremonies; which they who do not study, are miserably in the dark as to the wisdom of the Mosaic dispensation.

The wisdom of our blessed Saviour was always conveyed under the same form; all his instructions were given in *parables*, were visible objects signifying intellectual things; and *without a parable spake he not unto them*; which form of speech, they who do not study and delight in, as the medium of instruction which the wisdom of God hath preferred from the beginning of the world, will never see farther either into the Old or New Testament.

The mission of Moses bears witness, in the form of it, to the mission of Jesus Christ; and gives the most worthy idea that can be conceived both of the dignity and design of it. Both these ministers of God were sent upon their commissions by a voice from heaven. God appeared to Moses in a bush that burned with fire, and said, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them; and, now come, I will send thee into Egypt. So when Jesus was appointed to his ministry, there came *a voice from the excellent glory,*

glory, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

The redemption of the people under Moses at the Exodus from Egypt, having already been considered as a figure of the world's redemption under Jesus Christ, I need not dwell upon it here. I may however observe, that as the servitude of the Hebrews was extreme, and their oppression intolerable, when Moses was raised up to redeem them ; so was the power of Satan at its utmost height, over Jews and Gentiles, at the coming of Christ. He was permitted to bind and to oppress after a strange manner the sons and daughters of Abraham. And if we consider the state of the Heathens at that time all over the world, we find them under the grossest darkness of idolatry, and the most abominable corruption of manners : so that Christ was wanted by the world of Jews and Gentiles as much as Moses by the Hebrews in Egypt.

On this occasion, we have before us a remarkable sign attending the mission of Moses ; which being insisted upon by St. Stephen must (like all the other ways of God) have its sense and signification. God appeared to Moses in the desert, from a bush which was on fire and yet was not consumed. Which is a sign, first

applying itself as an assurance of deliverance from the affliction of Egypt ; and secondly as a pattern of the incarnation, when God should come down from heaven to redeem the whole world.

The burning bush was an earnest and a pledge to assure Moses, that the people of God, though then in a low and miserable condition (aptly signified by a thorn growing on a desert) and under a fiery trial in a furnace of affliction, should yet survive it all ; as the bush, though in the midst of a flame of fire, was not consumed. According to this model, such should the event be ; and such in fact it was, to the Hebrews in Egypt. As God was present in the bush which was not burned, so being present with his people in their fiery trial, and as it were partaking with them in their sufferings, they would certainly be delivered out of them : according to those words of the prophet Isaiah ; *in all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them* : which passage some of the Jewish commentators themselves have properly applied to this exhibition of the burning bush, as a sign that God was with his people in their afflictions, to defend and preserve them in the fiery trial.

And if this wonderful spectacle was a sign
that

that God was with *them*; surely it was also a sign that he would be with us in a like form for the salvation of the world from the bondage of sin: that, as the thorn of the desert is the lowest amongst the trees, so should he take upon himself the form of a servant, the lowest condition of humanity; submitting to serve with us, and be afflicted in all our afflictions; that in and with him we might be enabled to sustain and survive the sharpness of death. That, as the children in the furnace of fire felt no harm because the Son of God was with them in the midst of it; so should not we be consumed by the trials of this world or the fire of judgment itself. Herein was it also signified, that the manifestation of God to man should not be that of a consuming fire, but of a benign light and glory instead of it; *a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of his people Israel.* It was signified, that wrath was turned away; that God was reconciled, and that there is *good will* to man from him that *dwelt in the bush* *.

This appearance of God to Moses is such a testimony to his appearance afterwards in the flesh, that if we lay the whole together as a figure of the poverty of his birth, like that of

a root out of a dry ground ; of the servility of his condition ; of the thorns he bore at his crucifixion ; of the glory and brightness of his transfiguration ; of the misery of man ; the condescension of God ; the necessity of a redeemer : in all these things met together in this exhibition of the burning bush, I see a complication of wonders, which cannot worthily be spoken of : we must adore the subject as we can, and leave it to the more adequate contemplation of angels.

The work of Moses in delivering his people was attended with a display of divine power, which shewed how it should be in the other case. *He brought them out*, saith St. Stephen, *after he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years.* So it may be said of Jesus Christ in the words to the same effect, " he brought them out after he had shewed
" wonders and signs ; casting out devils, healing the sick, raising the dead, feeding a hungry multitude in a wilderness, and giving
" every possible demonstration of a divine
" power, exercised for the deliverance and salvation of the people of God."

The power of Moses in Egypt, and at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, was as visible

as

as the sun in the heavens ; and it was as plain and certain that he acted by the finger of God, as that he acted at all. But now the argument of St. Stephen leads us to observe, as one of the greatest of all wonders, how this man of might and wisdom, so miraculously preserved, and so highly commissioned, was understood and received by the people to whom he was sent? For if the forefathers of the Jews had rejected their lawgiver thus commissioned, and attested by all the evidences of divine power; then was it so far from being any objection against Jesus Christ, that they had misunderstood him, and hated him and crucified him; that it was requisite to the truth and divinity of his commission; that his *brethren* should *sell* him, and *cast him out* as they had done to *Joseph*; and that they should *refuse* him, as they had *refused Moses*. With this argument St. Stephen pressed the Jews, till they were unable to bear the force of it: and, I declare, I think it so forcible at this day, that a man must either be a Christian upon the strength of it, or fall into a rage, like the Jews, if he has an interest against it. Hear how the case is represented—
 “ *This Moses whom they refused, saying, who*
 “ *made thee a ruler and a judge, the same*
 “ *did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer,*

“ by the hands of the angel which appeared to him in the bush ”—He supposed that his brethren would have understood, how that God by his hand would deliver them ; but they understood not—“ This is he—to whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt.”

What the high priest and the people of the Jews, before whom St. Stephen pleaded, must have felt in their minds from such a representation as this, when the fact of rejecting Jesus Christ was fresh upon their memories and consciences, is more easy to be conceived than expressed. There is no occasion on which the mind of man feels more miserable, than when it is convicted without being converted. Such was the case with St. Stephen’s hearers ; so they acted like men that were possessed ; they gnashed with their teeth, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him in a fury to put him to death : for so doth bigotry dispose of those whom it cannot answer.

Let us suppose, however, that some one amongst the rest was prevailed upon to apply the cases of Joseph and Moses, as St. Stephen had stated them, to what had lately come to pass in Jerusalem : then would he have reasoned

soned with himself in some such words as these.

“ Jesus of Nazareth offered himself to our nation as the true Messiah and the king of the Jews: yet none of our rulers or priests or pharisees believed on him, but hated him and despised him. What then? Was not the holy patriarch Joseph, with all his innocence and virtue, hated of his brethren, and persecuted for envy? One of the disciples of Jesus betrayed and sold him for a sum of money, and he was delivered to the Romans as a slave and a malefactor: but so did Joseph’s brethren sell him, and so did that innocent victim go down into Egypt among heathens as a slave, and was imprisoned as a malefactor under a false accusation. Yet did God bring this same Joseph to honour, and made his family who had despised him bow down before him; as, they say, God has now exalted this same Jesus, and that every knee is to bow to him. Many and mighty were the miracles of Jesus, such as we could not disprove, and such as were proper to shew that he was the expected redeemer: but we who were witnesses of them did not accept of them as such. Thus did our lawgiver Moses come forth to avenge our wrongs upon the Egyptians, supposing that his brethren would understand,

understand, from the part he took, that God by his hand would deliver them ; but they understood not ; they accused him for what he had done, and took part with the Egyptians, as we have taken part with the Romans, our task-masters, against Jesus Christ. When Moses undertook to compose the differences of his brethren and restore them to peace, the aggressor flew in his face, and questioned his authority with those saucy words, who made thee a ruler and a judge ? Thus did we insolently demand of Jesus on every occasion, who gave him his authority ; instead of submitting to it, and taking advantage of it for our own good. We represented him not as a Saviour, such as his works proved him to be, but a destroyer (as they made Moses a murderer) an accomplice of Beelzebub, the prince of the devils and the destroyer of mankind. Thus have we done unto him as our fathers did unto Moses : Yet was Moses sent of God to bring us out of Egypt ; and therefore so was Jesus sent to save his people from their sins. When Moses had overthrown the Egyptians and led our fathers into the wilderness, the people would not obey him, but turned back in their hearts into Egypt, the scene of all their misery : and if we thrust Jesus from us, it must have been owing to the same

same cause, a vile attachment to this sinful world, which holds us in bondage, and has made us take part against him with our tyrants and oppressors.

“ Upon the whole then, our refusal of Jesus
“ Christ can be no argument against him.
“ Moses was undoubtedly sent to be a ruler and
“ deliverer, and we all believe it ; yet he was re-
“ fused by the people whom God sent him to
“ redeem : and though they had been witnesses
“ of all his mighty works, their hearts were not
“ converted. So it hath been with us now ;
“ and therefore woe be unto us ! *we are verily*
“ *guilty concerning this our brother* ; and what
“ is most to our shame and confusion, our guilt
“ is of such a form as to turn against ourselves ;
“ and prove the very thing we have been so
“ forward to deny ; namely, that he who was
“ sold like Joseph, hath like him received fa-
“ vour and dominion ; that he who hath been
“ affronted, and refused, and thrust away by us
“ as Moses was, is the true lawgiver, whom we
“ have thus conformed in all things to the ex-
“ ample of our prophet ; even of that Moses,
“ who said, a prophet shall the Lord your God
“ raise up like unto me ; and we have done all
“ that was wanting on our part to make the
“ likeness complete.”

Thus

Thus must they have reasoned, on whom St. Stephen's argument had the proper effect ; and thus would the Jews reason at this day, who know the Old Testament, and have heard the history of Jesus Christ, if they were not under a judicial infatuation, which God can remove when it is just and fit. We who are not under the like blindness can see how plainly and irresistibly these figures of the Old Testament shew the certainty of those things wherein we have been instructed. When Stephen disputed with the Jews, he took advantage of this evidence, and *they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit with which he spake.* When we hear of the effect of this disputation, and find nothing in his speech but a mere narrative of facts compiled from the scripture, we wonder how the Jews could be so provoked by it, more than by reading the bible according to their daily custom : but when we see how all this is pointed as a testimony to the sufferings and exaltation of Jesus of Nazareth, the wonder ceases ; and it is no longer strange, that they whose hearts were not turned to good by it, should be provoked to rage and persecution.

This subject will suggest some important reflections, which I must beg of you to take in-
to

to your serious consideration, and lay them up in your hearts as long as you live.

1. From the cases of Joseph and Moses, and more particularly from that of Christ himself, we are to learn, that the qualifications which recommend a person to God, will not make him acceptable or respectable with men, but often the contrary; for amongst men, innocence is envied, godliness is despised, zeal discouraged, and justice hated. Whence it has been established by wise and virtuous men as a maxim founded on experience, that the voice of the multitude is never to be regarded as a test of truth or merit. Fashionable error is a dreadful enemy to the advocates of truth: and there never was an age or country in which error did not get into fashion, and take the direction of men's minds; so that truth has but a poor chance without an overruling Providence to second and enforce it. We have a famous passage to this effect from the greatest moral philosopher of the Greeks, who declared with a kind of prescience, that if a man perfectly just were to come upon earth, he would be *impoverished, and scourged, and bound as a criminal, and, when he had suffered all manner of indignities, would be put to the shameful death* of

of suspension or crucifixion *. There is not a more spotless character in the scripture than that of Joseph: yet his brethren hated him, and their envy had no rest till they had sent him out of their sight as a slave. Moses was a pattern of meekness, and with a struggle of diffidence undertook his commission; a commission, with which he should have been received by a poor oppressed people, like, what he was in fact, a messenger from heaven. But they railed at him, as if he had only made that condition worse which was bad enough before; so had provoked those who were already enraged, and had *put a sword into their hands to slay them*. Thus the fearful and unbelieving (who are sometimes found amongst the wise ones of this world) are always disposed to discourage and condemn a zeal for the cause of God and the rights of his religion, as indiscreet, unseasonable and dangerous. Whence it follows, that if we are called upon to act in any public character, we must do people good against their will,

* Several of the fathers have taken notice of this extraordinary passage in Plato; looking upon it as a prediction of the sufferings of the *Just one* Jesus Christ; and after them it is noted by *Grotius de verit. Lib. 4. sect. 12. Casaubon* (Merick) has a learned and excellent Criticism upon it, in his *Treatise Of Credulity und Incredulity*, p. 135, &c.

will, and take the chance of being ungratefully or even despitely treated for it. None but the mean-spirited, or the ambitious, or the insipid, or the hypocritical, are spoken well of by all men; and popular applause is the grand object of a vain or knavish disposition. Therefore the Christian is wisely admonished, to seek that praise which cometh only from God; which is never bestowed upon false merit, and will never be wanting to the true.

2. From the example of the Jews, who were only irritated by St. Stephen's arguments, when they ought to have been converted; we see what a dreadful thing it is to have our reasons for hating and rejecting the truth. It is of infinite consequence that we should enquire what that meaneth—*they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.* What can be plainer than truth? And what is more amiable? And if it *saves* us, what in all the world is half so valuable? Yet that saving truth is the only truth men cannot of themselves understand: and if they do not understand it, what fearful commotions are raised by it! It is a powerful drug, which will either embitter and inflame the mind *, or restore it to reason. The bigotted Jew, the ancient heathen, the modern infidel, the man of levity and pleasure,
are

* *Stultus facit insanos.* TER.

are all upon a level, all equally adverse to the Christian plan of salvation ; all equally restless and impatient when the proofs of it are laid before them. Even *Paul* himself (who from the part he took when the blood of *the martyr Stephen was shed*, must have been present at the trial) could hear the martyr's apology without being persuaded by it : that very man, who afterwards struck into the same way of interpretation, and delighted to apply the figures of the law as a testimony to Jesus Christ. There was a time when he was not only deaf, but inveterate, and as he said, *exceedingly mad* against the Christians and all their arguments. Stephen might look like an angel, and reason like an angel: nothing could touch him. He had an opinion, that the Christians were wrong, and deserved to be persecuted : but opinion is that judgment which a man forms of the things of God without the grace of God. When Stephen had reasoned with his hearers, he prayed for them ; and perhaps the conversion of that glorious instrument of God, the blessed apostle St. Paul, might be granted in consequence of that prayer.

3. We are lastly to learn from the deliverance of the Hebrews under Moses, which God was pleased to accomplish by his hand, after all the contempt and opposition he had met with ;
that,

that, however the church, in bad times, may be corrupted and oppressed, and even averse to its own deliverance ; yet the counsel of God is sure ; and He who hath promised to be with it *to the end of the world*, will never forsake its interests. Kings, with their statesmen and politicians, may be jealous of its rights, and invade them without fear or shame : nay, the time may come, when the very idea of a divine authority, either in priests or kings, shall be as hateful among Christians, as Moses and Aaron were to Pharaoh and the magicians of Egypt : and there are too many amongst us already, who cannot speak of it with patience. But the powers of the world can proceed no farther than God shall permit ; and when things are at the worst, and seemingly past remedy, then will the *time of the promise draw nigh* ; God shall interpose in what form and manner he sees best ; and the church shall be conducted to glory and liberty, as the afflicted Hebrews were led forth to the possession of the land of Canaan.

LECTURE X.

ON MIRACLES; PARTICULARLY, THE MIRACLES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, AS THEY BELONG TO THE FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE OF THE SCRIPTURE.

WE are prepared to consider the miracles of the gospel, as descriptive of something beyond themselves: because we have already seen how the miracles of Moses, for the saving of the Israelites, are applied in the New Testament, as figures of the saving of all mankind by Jesus Christ. Our Saviour applied the lifting up of the serpent by Moses in the wilderness, to the lifting up of himself upon the cross, to draw all men unto him for the cure of their souls. The apostle tells us, that the rock which Moses smote, to give drink to the people, *was Christ*; that is, a figure of Christ, smitten for

for our sins, and giving to a thirsty world the waters of life. Moses fed the people with manna; but that manna was a figure of the *true bread from heaven which giveth life unto the world*. These things were our examples: the miracles wrought for them were signs of the miracles to be wrought for us. And as it was under the law, so it is under the gospel: the miracles of Christ are not of any private interpretation; but, like the miracles of Moses, with a miraculous effect carry a miraculous signification.

And now, for the right understanding of this whole matter, we are to consider, that the name of *Jesus* was given, because he who bore it was to *save his people from their sins*. Sin is the great distemper of man, and salvation from sin is the great deliverance. The want of grace is the greatest want of man, and therefore grace is the greatest gift of God. To save us from sin, and restore us to grace, was the great work which Jesus Christ descended from heaven to accomplish. Every word and every action of his life tended either to effect this, or to give us a right understanding of it: therefore, when we see him working miraculous cures upon men's bodies, we are still to consider him as the Saviour of men's souls; and that

he cured their bodies, as a pledge to assure us thereof.

As this is a matter of infinite importance toward the advancement of a Christian in the true knowledge and spirit of the gospel, and not so obvious to common understandings, I have reserved it to my last expository lecture, that you may take advantage of all that has gone before : and when you see into the figurative intention of the miracles of Christ, you will want no more of my instructions concerning the language of the scripture.

The wonders which Jesus Christ wrought upon earth in the course of his ministry were all of a particular sort, because more ends than one were to be answered by them. The world was not only to believe the fact of his heavenly mission; but to understand the design and object of it. Any supernatural act would have shewn, that he was invested with supernatural power; but as the object of his commission was to *save* mankind from their *sins*, all his miracles were *signs* of salvation towards the bodies of men; all explanatory of his great work in redeeming their souls from the fatal affects of sin. He went about *doing good*; and according to the present state of things under the fall, to do good, is to remove evil; to
 211 save

save mankind is to undo and *destroy the works of the devil*. The worst of these take place upon the soul; but we cannot apprehend them without some help, because the soul is invisible. When we speak of the faculties of the soul, we are obliged to borrow our words from the faculties of the body; so the evils and distempers of the soul must be signified to us by the evils and distempers of the body: and both of these proceed from the same cause; for had there been no sin in the soul, there would have been no death in the body. The bodies of men fell into infirmities along with their souls: and it was of God's mercy that it so happened, for we, who take all our notions of the soul and its operations from those of the body, could not otherwise have understood the distempers of the mind: whence it too frequently happens, that they who never were sick, are apt to be ignorant of the weakness of the inward man, and so become confident and self-sufficient—*thou sayest I am rich, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked* *.

When man was first placed in paradise, his body was in health, and his soul had all its fa-

culties in perfection : and if we would know what a perfect soul is, we must consider what a perfect body is. When the body of man is in a state of perfection, its senses are all perfect. Its sight is quick and strong ; its hearing is uninterrupted ; its limbs are vigorous and active ; it distinguishes all tastes and all odours without error, and in its feelings it is sensible of all the impressions of the elements. So when the soul is in equal health, it sees and understands things spiritual ; it sees God and his truth as plainly as the eye sees the light of the day ; it hears and attends to all important and useful information : it walks with God in the way of his commandments, and even runs with pleasure to do his will, as the angels fly through the heaven for the same purpose : it distinguishes good and evil without error ; and, apprehending their different effects and consequences, it relishes the one and abhors the other : its speech is employed in the praises of God, and will be telling of his wonders from day to day, for it knows no end thereof ; it therefore preserves its relation to God, as his *child*, his *scholar*, his *subject*, in *affection*, *attention* and *abedience*. O blessed state ! who can survey this condition of humanity without bewailing its loss, and aspiring to its restoration ?

For

For lost it was; and under that loss we are now suffering; and as such sufferers we were visited by Jesus Christ. When sin entered, man fell from this perfect state of mind, into ignorance and blindness of heart; inattention to divine knowledge and instruction; aversion to spiritual things; error of judgment; insensibility of the consequences of good and evil; and inability, as well as indisposition, to do the will of God. His soul is as a body maimed and distempered: for sin is not only a defect, but a positive disease, including the nature of all the diseases incident to man. The eyes of his mind are blind; its ears are deaf; its tongue is dumb; its feet are lame; its constitution infected with foul distempers; it is agitated with vain cares, cheated with vain pleasures, and distressed with emptiness and want. When the apostle had this subject before him, well might he exclaim, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* For the life we have upon these terms as natural men, is rather death than life; and so the gospel hath considered it: we are *dead in trespasses and sins*, and the world in which we live is dead unto God.

Now as Jesus Christ came to restore us from this state of disease and death into which we

are fallen, all his mighty works present him to us as a deliverer from *these evils*; and therefore while his miracles were *evidences* of his own divine mission, they were *signs* of our *salvation*. They all spake the same sense; and our Saviour himself hath given us a key to the right interpretation of them all: who, when he was about to give sight to a man born blind, did not proceed to the cure, till he had instructed his disciples in the sense of it, in such terms, as could not be applied to it as a bodily cure. “As long as I am in the world, I am
 “the light of the world,” as if he had said, “I
 “give light to this man born in darkness, as a
 “sign that I give light to mankind, who are all
 “born in the like state. This man is but an
 “individual; and all the persons to whom I
 “shall restore their bodily sight are but few;
 “but a spiritual discernment in the eyes of the
 “mind is necessary to all mankind; therefore
 “I who give it am a *light* to the *whole world*,
 “and I give sight to this man as a *sign* of it.”

That the miracle might be more instructive, a very peculiar form was given to it. He moulded the dust of the ground into clay, and having spread it upon the eyes of the man, he commanded him to go and wash off this dirt in the pool of *Siloam*. Here the reason of the
 thing

thing speaks for itself. What is this mire and clay upon the eyes, but the power this world has over us in shutting out the truth? Who are the people unto whom *the glorious light of the gospel of Christ cannot shine*, but they whose minds the *God of this world hath blinded*? So long as this world retains its influence, the gospel is *hidden* from the eyes of men; they are in a *lost* condition; and nothing can clear them of this defilement, but the water of the divine Spirit *sent* from above to wash it away.— This seems to be the moral sense of the miracle: and a miracle thus understood becomes a sermon, than which none in the world can be more edifying. Our Saviour himself preached in the same way to his disciples, to instruct them in the nature of his mission, and of their own salvation. In short the gospel is sealed up, and a man may as well read a modern system of morality, unless he sees that Jesus Christ is the physician of human nature, and that a miserable and sickly world is in daily want of his healing power.

The same spiritual turn is given to the miraculous distribution of bread in the wilderness. Christ informed the people, that if they followed him only to eat of this bread, for the feeding of their bodies, they mistook the nature of the
miracle.

miracle. *Ye seek me because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you.* The meat he then gave was only a figure of that which he gives in a higher sense to all that believe on him, and which is *meat indeed*; no other in comparison of this being worthy of the name. By *bread* our Saviour sometimes means the doctrine of the gospel, which nourishes the mind; and sometimes his own body spiritually taken in the eucharist: but whether we here understand the bread of the Lord's supper, or the preaching of the word; both are distributed to the hungry multitude of mankind in the midst of this desert: and a sort of food this is, which, like the manna laid up in the tabernacle (called the *hidden manna* *) never perisheth, but nourisheth the soul to life eternal.

From the curing of the blind and the feeding of the hungry, let us proceed to the raising of the dead. It appears to us as a most wonderful thing, that a dead man should hear the voice of Jesus Christ and return to life: but it is more wonderful that the grace of God and the calling of his gospel should revive a man dead in sin; because,

* Revelation ii. 17.

because, to speak after the manner of men, it seems harder to revive a dead soul than to raise a dead body. And now observe the order of things. The first transgressions brought with it a present death to the spirit of man, and a future death to his body. The power of the gospel brings a present life to the spirit, and a future life to the body; and as the renovation of the spirit is the greater in effect, and most necessary to be understood, the restoration of a dead body, which is more striking to the senses, is exhibited as a visible sign of it. The scripture therefore in many places speaks of the conversion of the soul to a life of righteousness as a rising from the dead; as in Eph. v. 14, where the apostle paraphrases these words of the prophet Isaiah, *arise, shine, for thy light is come*, and gives their full meaning to them; *awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light**. Here the dead
are

* This is delivered as the sense of the prophet, because it is ushered in as a quotation, *wherefore he saith or it* (that is, *the scripture*) *saith*. The language of the prophet is an allusion to the rising of mankind from sleep when the sun rises upon them in the morning; but as the prophet doth not speak according to the letter, the light is the true light of the world, and the sleep is the sleep of death, either natural or spiritual: and so the apostle hath on'y translated the words of the prophet from the letter into the spirit, and given them their true meaning.

are of the same sort with those spoken of by Christ in the gospel, *let the dead bury their dead*; of whom the former are the dead in spirit, and the latter the dead in nature. The word *death* has the like sense in the sentence which was pronounced on man in paradise, *in the day thou eatest thou shalt die*: and there are numberless passages of the Old Testament, in which the words *life* and *death* do not signify the natural, but the spiritual life and death. I know not how to understand, but by admitting both a natural and a spiritual resurrection, those other words of Christ, *the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God*; for certainly, the resurrection which *now is* must be that figurative resurrection spoken of by the prophet and apostle; and the margin of our bibles accordingly refers us to such passages as speak of a quickening unto grace. I cannot but understand the raising of Lazarus from the putrid state of death, as a sign that the same power should revive men who had been long dead in trespasses and sins, and seemed to be past grace; as was the case with the whole heathen world.

In the raising of the widow's son, at the city of Nain, we have a lesson of this kind worthy of our consideration. "A dead man was carried

ried out; the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and much people of the city was with her." This was a funeral of some pomp, and so we may suppose the young man was a considerable person. Thus, alas, do we see many sons of the church, in the prime of life, in their best days, who seem to know no more that Jesus Christ is near to them, than if they were stretched out upon a bier. Such examples are too often found in low life; but they are much more common among young men of station and fortune; too many of whom are totally insensible to the things of God; lifeless and stupid at prayer; and as indifferent to the word of God from a reader or a preacher of it, as if they did not hear one word that is spoken, and had no concern with that other world, to which, young as they are, time is in the mean while carrying them out; though they may seem to move slowly on, as is the custom in a funeral. Nothing less than that same power which raises the dead can awaken such to hear that voice which is daily calling unto them in the words of the gospel, *Young man, I say unto thee arise*: hear now the voice of him that hath pity upon thee, and calls thee to rise and be saved; because thou wilt soon be forced to hear that other voice,

voice, which shall bid thee rise from the earth to be judged for thy sins.

The cure of sin in all its symptoms and effects is signified by other like miraculous works; such as the deliverance of the body from bondage and imprisonment, from uncleanness, from weakness, lameness, deafness, poison, and madness, or the possession of the devil: all which are so fulfilled in the deliverance of the soul from sin, that the prophets seem rather to have predicted the salvation of which the miracles were signs, than the miracles themselves: that is, they seem to have predicted the miracles rather in the spiritual sense than the natural.— Thus where Isaiah * describes the conversion of the Gentiles as a *blossoming of roses* in a *desert*, and a sound of joy and *singing* in a lonely *wilderness*; it follows, that *the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, the lame man shall leap as a hart, the tongue of the dumb shall sing, &c.* all of which expressions must be applied to the souls of men; for if we understand any of them literally of the body, we shall make the passage inconsistent with itself; or, to make it uniform, we must suppose, that the gospel should be revealed to multiply flowers in a wilderness. Therefore, the

* Chap. xxxv.

the inference is easy ; that the works of giving sight to the blind, opening the ears of the deaf, &c. though certainly to be performed by our Saviour in the letter, were to be no more than signs of the salvation foretold by the prophet.

The misery of man under sin, is like the bondage of an imprisoned captive ; and the liberty of those who are made free by the Son of God under the gospel, is like that of a person miraculously brought out of prison. As such the prophet speaks of it, in a passage which our Saviour has applied to his own ministry. "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim *liberty to the captives.*" Who are these captives? Did Jesus Christ come to publish a goal-delivery to debtors and felons? by no means: but he delivers those who are *appointed unto death*, and are *tied and bound with the chain of their sins*: and to give an assurance of it to all men, he miraculously opened the doors of a dungeon, and delivered his servants from their bonds.. When this happened to Peter, he supposed it to be a vision: when the Lord thus *turned his captivity*, he was *like unto them that dream* ; but he came to himself,

self, and *considered the thing*; and seeing farther into the wisdom of God than we do, he probably considered the whole as a scenical representation of that deliverance, which is wrought by him who was sent to *proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.*

Sin appears to us in another form, as a loathsome distemper, like the leprosy, which descended by inheritance, and incrusted the whole body with a foul humour. So doth that sin, which is in the constitution of man, break out and discover its offensive nature. This distemper therefore the great physician condescended to cure, either by his word alone, or by a miraculous *washing*, to denote the salutary effect of *baptism*. The purification of the Gentiles had been signified long before by the *cleansing of Naaman the Syrian*, who was ordered to *wash seven times in Jordan*. He supposed, that if water would cure him, the rivers of Damascus would have done as well; but he was taught, that *salvation was of the Jews*: the water that could effect his cure was to be taken from Jordan, where Christ should be baptised; and his baptism was a prelude to the baptism and conversion of the heathen world; whose distemper was afterwards transferred to the worldly-minded
Jews,

Jews, as that of Naaman was fixed upon Gehazi, the covetous attendant on the prophet. To shew that this cleansing by baptism should not take place upon the Jews, but the Gentiles, our Saviour hinted to those of the synagogue, that there were many lepers in Israel when this happened, and none of them were cleansed saving Naaman the Syrian. The Jews could bear to hear of any thing rather than the acceptance of the Gentiles; and seeing his meaning they were filled with rage, and would have cast him down headlong as an enemy to his country.

Other miracles of Christ were intended to shew how the power of God is necessary to help the impotence of man. He must open our lips before we are able, and furnish us with matter before we know how to praise him or pray to him; therefore the tongue of the dumb was loosed, and even babes and sucklings were empowered to utter hosannas to his name. The deaf were made to hear, because men have ears which neither hear nor understand, nor can attend to the words of divine wisdom, till God has opened them: of which there are many lamentable examples in the gospel, and I wish there were none at this day.

The lame were made to walk, because *the way of man is not in himself*; it is God alone that enableth us to walk, yea, to run with pleasure and swiftness, as the feet of an hind, in the way of his commandments. In short, all the faculties of man are useless in the service of God, like the limbs of one sick of the palsy, which cannot lift or move themselves till some new strength is communicated. The prophet instructs us how this should be when God should be revealed: *strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees*; or, as the apostle words it, *lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees*; and *make strait paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed*.* which terms are all applied in an intellectual sense to the minds of weak Christians.

Another miracle of Christ, and one of the most considerable, is that of relieving the possessed by casting out evil spirits: the design of which is to teach us, that there is a spirit *working* in the children of disobedience (the Greek signifies *possessing*† them) which no-

* Heb. xii. 13.

† *Ενεργησις*; the common name of demoniacs, or possessed people, was *Ενεργηται*, *Energumēni*.

thing but the power of the gospel can cast out. When we observe how strangely men err in their judgments; how they hasten towards their own destruction, maiming their bodies and ruining their fortunes by their vices, as if they *hated their own flesh*; preferring nakedness and wretchedness, and loathsome diseases and infamy, to peace, honour, health, and happiness; we must conclude they are under the working of some malignant power, beyond the mere depravity of nature: for nature would always act in men, as it does in brutes, on a principle of self-preservation. Such as were possessed by the devil uttered horrible noises, and chose a miserable residence amongst the tombs of the dead. And bad as such a spectacle may be, it is not a worse example of Satan's power, than when we hear a miserable man crying out for curses to descend from heaven, inviting the blastings of lightning on their enemies, or their friends, or themselves; on their souls as well as their bodies. To live naked among the tombs is not a greater symptom of possession, than to fly from God, and his light and truth, and seek after the ways that lead to death. To bruise the flesh in frantic fits of despair, is not worse than to injure the health of the body with such

excess and riot, as wastes the flesh, and brings wounds and bruises and putrifying sores: yet the world, who are shocked at a madman, look with unconcern on this moral insanity, because the case is common.

It is a symptom of madness when a man delights in mischief: and how many do we see, who have no greater diversion, than to impose upon the innocent, and terrify people with vain fears, or mock at them when they are betrayed into real dangers.

The wise man, considering how fools make a mock at sin; how outrageous men are in their mirth, how perverse in their ways, how corrupt and irrational in their pleasures, pronounces upon them in plain terms; *the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, yea madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.** (Ratione expulsa, sensuq. religionis amoto, quæ immanitas, quæ feritas, quæ *dementia* non illico exoritur?) † without true religion to sober them and bring them to a right mind, men are in fact as much out of the way as lunatics; and worse in one respect, that they are still accountable as free agents for that reason which vice has extin-

* *Monita & præcepta Christiana*, p. 104. † Eccles. ix. 3:

guished.

guished. The man who does not see and consider that he is come into this world to be saved by Jesus Christ, is an idiot to all intents and purposes in the sight of God. If he is upon his defence against the power of the gospel, and puts it from him with those words of the demoniac, "Why art thou come to torment us?" he is a madman of the first class, to whom the poor lunatic, with a sceptre of straw, is an hopeful character.

Miserable is the condition of men under temptation or possession from evil spirits : but the power of grace sets us free from their terrors, with those comfortable words, *Who is he that shall harm you if ye be followers of that which is good?* As a pledge to assure us of which, our Saviour gave to his apostles an evident superiority over the powers of darkness : *Behold I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you* *. Who is this *enemy* ? The *enemy* of Christians is the devil ; and such poisonous vermin as serpents and scorpions are the emblems of him and his children. A miraculous power over these creatures which hurt the body, was an outward assurance to the world, that he who

Q 3 wounds

* Luke x. 19.

wounds the soul shall have no power to hurt a Christian. When the viper fastened on the hand of Paul, he shook him off into the fire from whence he came : and thither, into the element prepared for him, shall the devil be shaken off by the faith of those whom he assaults.

Another great miracle, and the last I shall take notice of, is that of our Saviour stilling the raging of the sea, and delivering his disciples in a storm. We, like them, are embarked with Christ in the ark of his church, and are subject to many dangers and terrors upon the waves of this troublesome world. So long as we are in the world, we shall be exposed to the cares and troubles of this mortal life. Sometimes the elevations of pride and ambition lift us up toward the heaven ; at other times disappointment and despair oppress us, and the deep threatens to swallow us up : while the Saviour in whom we have trusted seems to sleep, as if he were leaving us to perish in the storm. But the prayer of faith will at last awake him : we are therefore to trust in the worst of times, that he who rebuked the winds and the sea, when his disciples cried out, *Lord save us, we perish*, will after the same example save us when we pray to him ; that he will lessen our cares, and quiet
our

our passions; and restore us to peace, so that there shall be a great calm : the winds shall drop, the sun shall shine out, and there shall be peace of conscience, which is the greatest calm in this world.

Thus it appears that all the miracles of Christ have a figurative acceptation. From them we learn all the distempers of our souls, and where we are to apply for the cure of them.

To open this subject still farther, I desire you will observe what a curious opposition there is between the miracles of Christ, and the workings of Satan. As the power of Christ was exercised in such works of salvation as were proper to his character as the Saviour of Souls; so there is a surprising agreement between the outward works of the devil on the persons of men, and his inward works upon their minds; insomuch that his character, as a *destroyer*, is not less evident in the scripture, than that of Jesus Christ as a *Saviour*. From some opportunities satan had of shewing his power, we see how it is exercised. When some strolling Jews took upon them to deliver one that was possessed, the man, in whom the evil spirit was, leapt upon them, as a lion would leap upon his prey, and they fled out of that house *naked* and *wounded*. He who here strips

men, and tears off their clothes, is the same that left Adam naked in paradise; who delights still to repeat the same act, or even to see the shadow of it in nakedness and wretchedness: therefore the poor demoniac, who resided among the tombs, *ware no clothes* *.

When the evil spirits went into the herd of swine, the whole herd ran headlong into the sea and perished. After the same form doth the devil drive men headlong into the gulph of perdition, when he gets the direction of them. He was permitted to possess this unclean herd, that we may thence learn how an unclean life will prepare us to be driven into hell itself by the destroyer. Temperance, sobriety, and devotion prepare our bodies to be the temples of the Holy Ghost; but impure manners prepare the heart for unclean spirits, and give them the opportunity they desire. We have heard of certain arts to call up the devil: but a man need only live like a swine, and he will be sure to have his company.

A woman who was bowed together for eighteen years, and could in no wise lift up herself, is said to have had *a spirit of infirmity*, and to have been *bound of Satan*: whence it appears, that he is the instrument for inflicting
unaccountable

* Luke viii. 27.

unaccountable diseases. It is his will that none should be able to lift up their minds to heavenly things; and as a sign of it he bows their bodies towards the earth.

Those extreme cases, in which men raged and were thrown about, and torn, and tormented of the devil, were permitted, to shew us what his inclinations are toward the souls of all men living: that he would deprive them of all reason; disturb their imaginations with fancies of horror and despair; inspire them with cruelty toward themselves; and drive them from the living God into the regions of the dead. Such are the works of Satan; contrary in every respect to the works of Jesus Christ; and men, as their nature now is, being subject to his power, *exorcism*, or the casting out of the evil spirit, was admitted as a part of the office of baptism in the primitive church.

I would desire you to observe farther, in regard to our present subject, that the very same images are used in the 107th Psalm as in the miracles of Christ, to express the redemption of men's souls from the effects of sin by the goodness of God. *The redeemed of the Lord* are there called upon to praise him for gathering them out of a wilderness, and satisfying their souls when hungry and thirsty: For break-
ing

ing their bonds asunder, and delivering them out of prison, where they were bound in affliction and iron, and sat in darkness and the shadow of death: for healing them by his word when afflicted with sickness: for delivering them from the perils of the sea, and making the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. All this scenery is well drawn out, and finely applied, by a devout and elegant commentator of our own church *, who has made the book of Psalms more useful to pious Christians, than it ever was made since the reformation; and, I may add, before it. From that Psalm, as from the miracles of Christ, we learn the weakness and wretchedness of man, and the goodness of God with the power of his grace. We see the necessity of prayer for the help of God; after the example of those, who *cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and were delivered out of their distress.*

No forms of prayer can be more significant than those which are built upon the miraculous works of Christ. These shew us what our wants are, and thence teach us what we are to pray for: and when we have respect unto them, and the author of them, we mix an act of

* The Reverend Dr. *Horne*, Dean of Canterbury, and President of Magdalen college in Oxford.

of faith with our petitions, which will never fail to render them more acceptable ; for we read, that the power of Christ took effect on those only who had faith to be healed. There is not a want of man, nor any occasion in life, on which the miracles of Christ will not supply us with the finest matter of devotion, and in some such form as the following with which I shall conclude.

“ O Son of David, thou great physician of
 “ souls, who didst once exercise thy power in
 “ the land of Judæa, and wentest about doing
 “ good ; thou art still with us ; and hast pro-
 “ mised so to be unto the end of the world.
 “ Have mercy upon us under all the weak-
 “ nesses of our nature, and succour us under
 “ all oppression from evil men or evil spirits :
 “ deliver us from the bonds of our sins, and
 “ give light to us when we sit in darkness : open
 “ our eyes, that we may see the things which
 “ belong to our peace : give us an ear to hear
 “ and understand thy word ; and a tongue to
 “ praise and confess thee before men : give
 “ strength to our feeble hands, that they may be
 “ lifted up to thy name, and let our knees be
 “ flexible and ready at their devotions : cleanse
 “ us from our secret faults, as well as our out-
 “ ward offences ; feed our souls with the bread

“ of life, and let us hunger and thirst, that thou
 “ mayst satisfy us. Be mindful of us, O Lord,
 “ in our distresses, when we are tossed about
 “ upon the waves of this troublesome world:
 “ and in all our dangers of soul and body,
 “ stretch out, to save and defend us, that right
 “ hand which raised up thy disciple sinking in
 “ the mighty waters. In all things let our
 “ faith be toward thee, and then shall thy
 “ power and mercy be toward us for deliver-
 “ ance and salvation.” AMEN.

LECTURE XI.

THE USES AND EFFECTS OF THE SYMBOLICAL STYLE OF THE SCRIPTURE.

NOW it hath been shewn what the figurative language of the holy scripture is, by an induction of particulars ; we may proceed to speak with more confidence concerning the uses and good effects of it. We now stand as it were upon an hill, up to which our enquiry hath conducted us, thence to survey the fruitfulness of the holy land. We have seen that the *law*, in its sacrifices and services, had a *shadow of good things to come* ; that its history is an *allegory* ; that God used *similitudes* by his *prophets* ; that Christ spake in *parables* ; that the apostles preached *the wisdom of God in a mystery* ; in a word, that the whole dispensation of God towards man, is by signs, shadows and figures of visible things. The law of Moses,

ses, the Psalms, the Prophets, the Gospels and Epistles, and most of all the Revelation of St. John, use and teach this figurative language : and therefore, in the use and interpretation of it must consist the wisdom of those who are taught of God. *Here is the mind that hath wisdom, saith St. John, the seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth :* Where the word *wisdom* is applied to this science of decyphering the figurative expressions in the language of the Revelation. So at the end of the 107th Psalm, wherein the salvation of man's soul is set forth under all the forms of deliverance from bodily dangers, it is added, *whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.* Whatever the form and manner may be after which the divine wisdom is communicated, it must be the best : and such we shall find it when we enquire how the improvement of man's mind is promoted, and all the purposes of God's revelation answered by the use of this symbolical or figurative style of speaking from the images of things.

1. This method is necessary to assist the mind in its conceptions, and supply the natural defect in our understandings. Being men, invested with an earthly body, which hath a
sense

sense of nothing but material things, we cannot see truth and reason, in themselves, as spirits do : these things are of a different nature from our sight ; and therefore we are obliged to conceive them as they are reflected to us in the glass of the visible forms, and sensible qualities, of outward things.

It is the excellence of this mode of speaking that it is not confined to the people of any particular nation or language ; but applies itself equally to all the nations of the earth, and is universal. It was not intended for the Hebrew or the Egyptian, the Jew or the Greek, but for *man* ; for that being who is composed of a reasonable soul and a fleshly body ; and therefore it obtains equally under the Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian Dispensation ; and is of common benefit to all ages and all places. Words are changeable ; language has been confounded ; and men in different parts of the world are unintelligible to one another as barbarians ; but the visible works of nature are not subject to any such confusion : they speak to us now the same sense as they spoke to Adam in Paradise ; when he was the pupil of heaven, and their language will last as long as the world shall remain, without being corrupted.

Thus,

Thus, for example, if we take the word of *God*, we have a sound which gives us no idea; and if we trace it through all the languages of the world, we find nothing but arbitrary sounds, with great variety of dialect and accent, all of which still leave us where we began, and reach no farther than the ear. But when it is said, *God is a sun and a shield*, then *things* are added to words, and we understand that the being signified by the word *God*, is bright and powerful; unmeasurable in height, inaccessible in glory; the author of light to the understanding, the fountain of life to the soul; our security against all terror, our defence against all danger. See here the difference between the language of words and the language of things. If an image is presented to the mind when a sound is heard by the ear, then we begin to understand; and a single object of our sight, in a figurative acceptance, gives us a large and instructive lesson; such as could never be conveyed by all the possible combinations of sounds. So again, when we are told of a being whose name is the *devil*, we go to the derivation of the term, and find it signifies an *accuser*; and accusation may be true or false. But, when instead of the word, we have *a serpent* as a figure of him, we
are

are aware of his nature, and of our own danger. We understand that the devil is *insidious* and *insinuating*; that his tongue is *double*; and his wounds *poisonous* and *fatal*. When we are told that he is the *prince of darkness*, then we find that he promotes blindness and ignorance amongst men, as darkness takes away their sight; and that he is contrary to *God*, who is *light*. When the devil is said to be a *lion*, then we understand, that as hunger makes the furious beast wander about the desert in search of prey; so the devil, with an appetite to destroy and devour, is always going to and fro in the earth, to watch and take advantage of the ways of men.

So plain is this sort of teaching, and so effectual, that if I were to begin with the first elements of instruction to a child, I think I would teach this ideal language in preference to all the languages of the world; for this is the life and soul of all the rest, and the best preparation of the mind for receiving the wisdom of God, who hath every where instructed us after this form: which, while it helps the understanding, has a wonderful power to engage the attention and please the imagination. Man from his childhood is strangely delighted with pictures; and the passion lasts to the end of his life: for

when the eye ceases to be entertained as a child is, the mind will have its pictures for amusement and learning ; and the wisest and greatest among mankind have been captivated by them in all ages.

As philosophy derived much of its influence from the powerful imagery of poetry in the ancient tragedies of Greece ; so is the religion of revelation greatly assisted and enforced by its figurative language ; always pertinent and instructive : and, on proper occasions, exceedingly sublime and beautiful.

The two ends of poetry, as they are laid down by the greatest master in the art, are *to profit* and *to delight* ; to give the best instruction under the most pleasing form. The means it uses for the attaining of these ends, is to inform the mind by presenting to the imagination those pictures and images of truth, which are to be gathered either from created nature, or the actions of men, and the various scenes of animal and social life. Philosophy and poetry differ in this respect ; that the one instructs by words, and delivers its precepts literally ; the other by the images of things : and if these images are lively and proper, then the mind is delighted with a moral as the eye with the effect of a picture. Therefore good poetry,
under

under proper restrictions, is one of the greatest and best works of human art ; and hath always been accounted divine, as proceeding from the assistance of heavenly beings. Even in the oratory of prose, the method of managing well an allusion or comparison is of great value, because it is of great effect. He is the most agreeable speaker, who can open and adorn the argument of his discourse by some apt representation of truth from the nature of things. But in religious subjects, where it is of the utmost consequence that men should hear attentively, and be persuaded effectually, there this manner is most valuable of all.

How beautiful is that admonition of Saint *James*, from the propriety of the imagery under which the moral is conveyed ! He exhorts to govern the *tongue* ; which though so small a member of the body, is yet of such great effect, that to govern the tongue is to govern the whole man. “ If any man offend not in word, the
 “ same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle
 “ the whole body. Behold, we put bits in the
 “ horses mouths, that they may obey us, and
 “ we turn about their whole body. Behold
 “ also the ships, which though they be so great,
 “ and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they
 “ turned about with a very small helm, whither-

“soever the governor listeth.” Nothing upon the subject can possibly exceed the eloquence of this passage : and the Apostle carries on his discourse all the way in the same beautiful style of allusion.

How were the lowest among his hearers captivated, when our Saviour discoursed to them in parables ; explaining the doctrine of the kingdom of God from the scenes of nature which were daily before their eyes. The constitution of man’s mind is still the same, in the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant : and the principle on which it must be engaged to receive instruction can never alter. We are to learn all things by comparison ; and the salvation of our souls depends so much on our improvement under this mode of teaching, that it is wisely provided by the author of our nature, that we are so much delighted with imitation in every shape. All the representations of the stage, which attract the multitude, are nothing but imitations of characters and scenes of imagery : poetry, painting, and music, all engage the fancy with imitative effects of art. Mirth and sadness, conversation and devotion, the singing of birds and the confusion of a battle, are all inimitable in musical sounds.

But this great plan of imitation is no where

so conducted, nor carried to such a height, as in the signs and allegories of the holy scripture, which compose the richest scenery upon earth. If the fancy of man is delighted with imitation even in the smallest subjects, how much more, when the originals are objects of an eternal nature, and the delineation of them is from that wisdom, to which the things of time and the things of eternity are equally known: and which framed this visible world as a counterpart to the other.

Great is the evidence which arises when these two are laid together and compared; and I have frequently found it such by experience, when I have tried the force of it upon minds to whom it was new. If there be any difficulty in our creed, it is certainly much lessened, if the visible world presents to our senses the figures of those things which God hath proposed to our faith. To those who understand it, all nature speaks the same language with revelation: what the one teaches in words, the other confirms by signs; insomuch that we may truly say, the world is a riddle, and christianity the interpretation. If Christ is called the *true bread*, the *true light*, the *true vine*, and the talents or gifts of God's grace are the *true riches*, &c. then the objects of sense, without this their spirit

and signification, are in themselves mere image and delusion ; and the whole life of man in this world is but a shadow, vain and empty, till the truth and substance of it is seen and understood. This relation between things visible and invisible we could never have found out of ourselves ; but when the plan is proposed, it is so reasonable and striking, that nothing can resist it, but the blindness of false learning, or the malignity of vice, which has an interest against it. In the style of the scripture, the several objects in the visible creation, from the sun in the heavens, through the elements and seasons, the day and the night, the land and the sea, the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field, down to the grass that springeth out of the earth, and the stones which are scattered upon the face of it, do all fall in naturally as figures to explain and enforce the things that belong to the kingdom of God, and to the soul of man as a part of it. Whosoever meditates upon the world thus applied as a figure of truth, and sees that agreement between nature and revelation which revelation itself hath pointed out to us, will want no miracle to persuade him of the Christian doctrines : for nature itself is christian, and the world itself a daily miracle ; the heavens speak to us, and the earth and all things therein join
in

in the same testimony: so that if all nations were to disbelieve, nature itself would still continue a faithful witness to the truth: if the children of Abraham were to hold their peace, the stones would cry out.

Here we ought to descend to particulars, and shew how the state of nature and the several parts of it agree with the doctrines of the scripture; but there is not room for it on the present occasion: and I have purposely considered *the natural Evidence of Christianity* by itself in two lectures, which open a prospect into that extensive subject, without attempting to penetrate to the end of it; and to them I must now refer you.

To these advantages of the sacred style, I am now to add that which is the greatest of all, and will justify the attention I have bestowed for several years past upon the matter of these lectures; namely, that the spirit of those figures under which the bible delivers to us the things of God, has a power of raising and glorifying, even in this life, the spirit of man; producing an effect upon it, the same in kind with what it shall hereafter experience when admitted into the presence of God. This is a great thing to say; but I learn it of that apostle who laboured more abundantly in opening to

us the wisdom of God from the figures of the old testament. The same was also signified by our Saviour himself in his discourses with his disciples.

St. Paul teaches the Corinthians, that it is the proper business of the Christian ministry to preach the *spirit* of the law of Moses, and not to rest in the *letter* of it as the Jews did; whose weakness in this respect was foreshewed by what happened to their fathers; who could not look stedfastly on that glory which shone upon the face of Moses: for which reason Moses put a veil upon his face; which veil, saith the apostle, is still upon their hearts in the reading of the old testament. So far was the act of Moses fulfilled upon *them*.

But now with respect to *us* Christians, who see the glorious spirit of the new testament under the letter of the old, we are not like Moses when veiled, as the Jews are; but like Moses when turned to the Lord; and deriving glory to his own face from beholding the light of the divine presence. Just such is the effect of the spirit of the old testament on those who are converted and look towards it, through faith in Jesus Christ, who is the spirit and glory of the law: it occasions a transfiguration in man's nature, and derives glory to it, like to that which
fell

fell upon the face of Moses when he had conference with God, and was turned towards him. This is the effect which happens to us according to the sense of the apostle; whose words, though very obscure when taken independent of the context, will be easily understood after what hath been said—"We all, with open (that is, *unveiled*) face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as, by the spirit of the Lord;" or, as the margin reads, by *the Lord* who is *the spirit* of the law, as aforesaid. Of all which the sense, in brief, is this: there was a glory on the face of Moses underneath his veil, and there is a glorious spirit under the letter of his law, which they who behold stedfastly are themselves transfigured and glorified after the manner of Moses. Whoever beholds the glory of God is himself thereby glorified, as he who looks at the sun is shone upon by it. All we can see of God in this mortal life is in his word: there that light doth still shine which illuminated the face of Moses; and they who behold it reflected *as in a glass* from the figures and ceremonies of his law, are *changed* (Gr. *transfigured*) *into the same image, from glory to glory; from the glory of the law which appeared in Moses, to the*

the glory of the gospel which appeared in the transfiguration of Jesus Christ *.

A sight of that glory which is in the spirit of the law, is not only our privilege, but is absolutely necessary toward the conversion of a natural man into a spiritual one ; if it doth not rather presuppose such a conversion ; because a natural man can neither receive nor discern the things of the spirit of God. This was the case of the Jews ; they were not able to see the inward spirit of our Saviour's parables ; and so, instead of being converted they were only condemned by it. " Their ears, said he, are dull
" of hearing, and their eyes they have closed ;
" lest at any time they should see with their
" eyes, and should hear with their ears, and
" should understand with their hearts, and
" should be converted, and I should heal them."

Hence

* *Christianis cum legitur (Lex) thesaurus est absconditus in agro—ostendens sapientiam Dei—quoniam in tantum homo diligens Deum proficiet, ut etiam videat Deum, et audiat sermonem ejus, et exauditu loquelæ ejus in tantum glorificari, uti reliqui non possint intendere in faciem gloriæ ejus, quemadmodum dictum est a Daniele ; quoniam intelligentes fulgebunt, quemadmodum claritas firmamenti, &c.* Irenæi, Lib. 4. c. 48. Irenæus has here fallen upon the very same idea with that before us, though he does not collect it from the same passage.

Hence we see, that they who have the spiritual sense which discerns spiritual things, may be *converted* and *healed*: while they who have it not are only hardened in their unbelief. Instead of improving they grow worse, and are farther from God than ever: "whosoever hath not, "from him shall be taken away-even that he "hath." As it was with Christ in his parables, such to this day will be the success of every preacher of God's word, who keeps up to his profession as a minister of the spirit: if his hearers do not grow better and become spiritually minded, they will grow worse as the Jews did. The spirit of God's word which should *convert* and heal them will never prove to be an inactive indifferent medicine: it will either do good or harm; it will operate either towards life, or towards death; it will make men turn to God or drive them farther away from him: which is a serious and fearful consideration; and I pray to God you may lay it to heart. My only desire is to do you good, and I should be sorry to speak to the condemnation of any one soul committed to my charge. But you see how the case is: as the benefit is great, so is the danger: if there should be darkness where there ought to be light, how great will be that darkness!

Such

Such then is the excellence of the sacred style, that it is accommodated to our capacities, it delights our imagination, and leads us into all truth by the pleasantest way ; it improves the natural world into a witness of our faith ; it transfigures us from natural into spiritual men, and gives us a foretaste of the glorious presence of God. If these are the effects of it, it must be of infinite value to particular persons in their several studies and professions.

And first, it is absolutely necessary to a Christian preacher: whose doctrine, if it be after the form of the scriptural imagery, will be more intelligible, more agreeable, and more edifying to all sorts of hearers. If this is the method God hath been pleased to prefer for the teaching of man, it must be the best when one man undertakes to teach another. We have seen how our Saviour's preaching was in the form of parables: how the apostles in their interpretation of the old testament apply it as a figure and shadow of things to come ; and how in their exhortations they reason from some parallel case in the ways of nature. And still it will always be found, that nothing has such an effect in preaching, as the skilful handling of some image or figure of the scripture. For truth, as we have often observed, does not enter

ter into men's minds in its own abstracted nature, but under the vehicle of some analogy, which conveys a great deal of sense in very few words: and therefore the best preachers have always taken advantage of some such analogy, after the manner of the scripture itself, which gives us the pattern of all true preaching.

Let me shew you how this is by an example. Suppose a preacher would persuade his audience not to abuse the station in life to which Providence hath appointed them; and not to presume upon the character they may sustain amongst men for a short time here upon earth: he reasons from the transitory nature of worldly things: and this he teaches them to see in a glass, by setting before them the changeable scenery and temporary disguises of men in a theatre. In the world at large, as upon a stage, there is a *fashion* in the characters and actions of men, which *passeth away*, just as the scenery changes, and the curtain drops, in a theatre; to which the apostle alludes. The world is a great shew, which presents us various scenes and fantastic characters; princes, politicians, warriors, and philosophers; the rich, the honourable, the learned and the wise: and with these, the servant and the beggar, the poor, the weak, and the despised. Some seldom come
from

from behind the scenes; others, adorned with honour and power, are followed by a shouting multitude, and fill the world with the noise of their actions. But in a little time, the scene turns, and all these phantoms disappear. The king of terrors clears the stage of these busy actors, and strips them of their fictitious ornaments; bringing them all to a level, and sending them down to the grave, as all the actors in a drama return to their private character when the action is over.

From this comparison, how easy and how striking is the moral. Nothing but a disordered imagination can tempt an actor on a stage to take himself for a king, because he wears a crown, and walks in purple: or to complain of his lot, because he follows this fictitious monarch in the habit of a slave. Therefore let us all remember, that the world, like the stage, changes nothing in a man but his outward appearance: whatever part he may act, all distinctions will soon be dropped in the grave, as the actor throws off his disguise when his part is over. On which consideration, it is equally unreasonable in man, either to presume or to complain*.

One

* See Dunlop's Sermons, vol. 1. on 1 Cor. vii. 31. *The fashion of this World passeth away.*

One such moral lesson as this, which shews us the real state of things under a striking and familiar resemblance of it, is worth volumes of dull abstracted reasonings. It captivates the attention, and gives lasting information: for when such a comparison hath once been drawn out, the instruction conveyed by it will be revived as often as the image occurs to the memory.

To the scholar, the symbolical language of the bible is so useful, that every candidate for literature will be but a shallow proficient in the wisdom of antiquity, till he works upon this foundation: and for want of it, I have seen many childish accounts of things from men of great figure among the learned. In ancient times, sentiments and science were expressed by wise men of all professions under certain signs and symbols, of which the originals are mostly to be found in the scripture; as being the most ancient and authentic of all the records in the world, and shewing itself to be such in the form of its language and expression.

How nearly poetry and oratory are concerned with the science of symbolical expression, has already been observed. With this key, a scholar may penetrate far into the arts of poets and orators; and the next thing to composing well

well is to taste and judge well. But it is also of eminent use for unfolding the religious mysteries of Heathen antiquity.

The Grecian and Roman mythology has been much inquired into by the learned, and is still a great object with them. Whoever considers the form of religious instruction in the church of God; will plainly see, that the mystical or mythological form among the Heathens was derived from it, and set up against it as a rival. It pleased God to prefigure the mysteries of our faith from the beginning of the world by an emblematic ritual: this manner therefore the heathens would necessarily carry off with them; and when they changed the object of their worship, and departed from the creator to the creature, they still retained the mystical form, and applied it to the worship of the elements of the world; describing their powers and operations under the form of fable and mystery, and serving them with a multitude of emblematic rites and ceremonies. Because the true God taught his people by mystical representation, they truly would have their mysteries too: and I take this to be the true origin of the fabulous style in the Greek mythology: though it makes a wretched figure in many particulars; as the woolly-headed negro savage does, when
we

we consider him as a son of Adam descended from paradise. The whole religion of heathenism was made up of sacred tradition perverted, a customary ritual, and physiological fable; but the emblematic manner prevails in every part alike; and therefore every scholar ought to be well acquainted with it.

Yet after all, it will be found most valuable to the Christian believer. The knowledge of human languages prepares us for the reading of human authors; and great part of our life is spent in acquiring them. But the interpretation of this sacred language takes off the seal from the book of life, and opens to man the treasures of divine wisdom, which far exceed all other learning, and will be carried with us into another world, when the variety of tongues shall cease, and every other treasure shall be left behind.

We study some human writings, till we are so enamoured with the spirit of them, that it would be the highest pleasure to see and converse with the person, of whose mind we have such a picture in his works. Blessed are they who shall aspire to the sight of God on this principle; for their hope and their affection shall be gratified. They who now see him by faith, as he is manifested to them in his word,

shall sit with him in the glory of his kingdom :
and then they will know the value of that wisdom, which has led them through the shadows and figures of temporal things, to that other world, where all things are real and eternal.

THE SYMBOLICAL FORM COMMON TO THE
WISDOM OF ANTIQUITY, PROFANE AS
WELL AS SACRED.

(A SUPPLEMENT TO THE LAST LECTURE.)

IT was observed in the foregoing lecture, that in ancient times *sentiment and science were expressed by wise men of all professions under signs and symbols*. I could not pursue this observation in the body of the lecture, as being less proper for the pulpit. But it is pity we should drop a matter of so much curiosity and importance without descending to some examples of what I there advanced.

Whoever enters into the learning of antiquity, or, if already learned, recollects what he has met with, will soon discover, that theologians, moralists, politicians, philosophers, astronomers; all who have made any pretensions to wisdom, have used the language of symbols: as if the mind were turned by nature to this kind of expression,

pression, as the tongue is to sounds : and indeed this language of signs is, properly speaking, the language of the mind ; which understands and reasons from the ideas, or images of things, imprinted upon the imagination.

All the *idols* in the world, with their several *insignia*, were originally emblematic figures, expressive of the lights of heaven and the powers of nature. *Apollo* and *Diana* were the sun and moon ; the one a male, the other a female power, as being the lesser and weaker of the two. Both are represented as shooting with arrows, because they cast forth rays of light, which pierce and penetrate all things.

As the objects, so the forms of worship were symbolical : particularly that of dancing in circles to celebrate the revolutions and retrogradations of the heavenly bodies. It was an ancient precept, *περὶ κυκλίου περιπατοῦντος*, “ turn round or move in a circle when you practice divine adoration :” that is, do as the heavenly bodies themselves do.

—“ that move in mystic dance, not without song. MILT.
We find the sacred dance appointed and practised in the church : where its true and original intention was probably to ascribe to the Creator the glory of the heavenly motions : and the idea might be that of a religious dance, in those
words

words of the psalm, *let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad*: the other parts of the creation being called upon to signify their adoration by their own proper motions; as the *sea* to *roar*, the *trees* to *wave*, the *floods* to *clap their hands*.

The figures by which the constellations and signs are distinguished in the heavens, are mostly symbols of such high antiquity, that we are not able to trace them up to their original. The accounts given of them by the Greeks and Romans deserve no regard, being childish and ridiculous. In many of these the meaning is easy, because they speak for themselves. The *Bears*, inhabitants of the arctic regions, have possession of the northern pole. The *Ram*, *Bull*, and *Lion*, all sacred to the solar light and fire, are accommodated to the degrees of the sun's power as it increases in the summer months. The *Crab*, which walks sideways and backwards, is placed where the sun moves parallel to the equator, and begins in that sign to recede towards the south. The *Scales* are placed at the autumnal equinox, where the light and darkness are equally balanced: the *Capricorn*, or wild mountain-goat, is placed at the tropical point from whence the sun begins to climb upwards towards the north. The ear of

corn in the hand of *Virgo* marks the season of harvest. The precession of the equinoctial points has now removed the figures and the stars they belong to out of their proper places; but such was their meaning when they were in them.

Royalty and government were from the earliest times distinguished by symbolical insignia. A kingdom was always supposed to be attended with *power* and *glory*. The glory of empire was signified by a crown with points resembling rays of light, and adorned with orbs, as the heaven is studded with stars. Sometimes it was signified by horns, which are a natural crown to animals; as we see in the figure of Alexander upon some ancient coins. The power of empire was denoted by a rod or sceptre. A rod was given to Moses for the exercising of a miraculous power; whence was derived the magical wand of enchanter; and he is figured with horns to denote the glory which attended him when he came down from the presence of God. In the *Iliad* of *Homer*, the priest of *Apollo*, who comes to the Greeks to ransom his captive daughter, is distinguished by a *sceptre* in his hand, and a *crown* upon his head; which is called *σφηρα θεοῖο*, the crown of the God, because the glory of the priest was supposed to be derived

rived from the deity he represented. So long as monarchy prevailed, the sceptre of kings was a single rod : but when *Brutus* first formed a republic at Rome, he changed the regal sceptre into a bundle of rods, or faggot of sticks, with an ax in the middle, to signify that the power in this case was not derived from heaven, but from the multitude of the people, as peers in empire ; who were accordingly flattered with *majesty* from that time forward ; till monarchy returned, and then they were as extravagant the other way,

“ Divisum imperium cum Jove Cæsar habet.”

Virgil plainly understands the *bundle of rods* as the ensign of *popular* power, by opposing to it the majesty of monarchy.

— Non populi fasces, non pupura Regum.

GEORG. II. 495.

The metaphysical objects of the mind, such as the virtues, the vices, the properties and qualities of things, were represented of old with great ingenuity for moral instruction. We have a good specimen of this kind in the emblematical figure of *Time*, which, for any thing we know, may be almost as ancient as time itself. He was figured by the artists of Greece as an old man, running on tiptoes, with wings at

his feet, a razor, or a scythe, in his right hand, a lock of hair on his forehead, and his head bald behind: of all which particulars the signification is too well known to need a comment. *Justice* with her sword and scales; *Fortune* with her feet upon a rolling sphere, and her eyes hood-winked; *Vengeance* with her whip; *Envy* with her snakes; *Pleasure* with her enchanted cup; *Hope* with her anchor; *Death* with his dart and hour-glass; and innumerable others of the same class, shew what delight men have always taken in painting their ideas after various ways under the images of visible forms, to give substance and force to their thoughts: and painters are but indifferently furnished for their profession without a competent knowledge of these things. The poetical figure called *prosopopæia*, or, *personification*, from whence all these devices are borrowed, is no where so frequently used, nor with so much sublimity, as in the holy scripture: of which the learned author *De Sacra Poesi* has selected many fine examples.

The enigmatical method of Pythagoras is well known; who was so fond of teaching by signs, that he made use of the letter Y to signify the two different roads of vice and virtue, to one of which young men give the preference,

1

when

when the age of trial brings them to the point where the way of life divides itself into these two. Certain moral precepts are preserved, which are called the symbols of Pythagoras*. He advises *not to keep animals with crooked claws*; by which he means, that we should not take into our houses and make companions of persons who are fierce and cruel in their nature; such as another author calls *θηρία ἀνθρωπομορφα* *wild beasts in the shape of men*.

The law of the Hebrews appointed the purity of their diet as a pattern and admonition to purity of conversation: after the example of which (for *Pythagoras* was a *Syrian*) he bids us *ἀναμνησιν ἀνιχνύειν*, to abstain from all such as die of themselves. He orders, *not to stop upon a journey to cut wood*; that is, not to turn aside after things impertinent to the end and purpose of our life. Also, never to make any *libation* to the Gods from *a vine which has not been pruned*: meaning, that no offering would be acceptable but from the fruits of a severe and well-ordered life. He pronounced it a base action to *wipe away sweat with a sword*; that is, to take away by force and violence what another hath earned by his labour. The literal

* These symbols are printed with Hierocles on the Golden Verses, and are commented upon by Gyraldus.

ral sense of which symbol will not be understood, but by those who know, that the ancients used a flat instrument like the blade of a knife, with the edge of which they wiped away sweat from the skin, and cleared it of the water, &c. after the use of the bath. It was another of his sayings, that it is a foolish action *to read a poem to a beast*, to communicate what is excellent to a stupid ignorant person : which is the same for sense with that figurative prohibition in the gospel, *not to give a holy thing to a dog*, nor *to cast pearls before swine*. To these symbols of Pythagoras the hieroglyphic philosophy of Egypt was nearly related, which *Pierius* hath taken great pains to interpret; and also the fables of *Æsop*, which teach prudence and wisdom, and shew the colours of vice and virtue, from the instincts of animals.

Sacraments and ceremonies in religion are significant actions, which all nations and all ages have observed in their worship; and the church still retains them: though these latter times (and this unhappy country in particular) have produced a spurious race of Christians, who have thrown off sacraments and ceremonies all together; as if they had consulted with some evil spirit of a beggarly taste. Priests and singers in our church wear a white linen garment

ment as a sign of purity, and to give them a nearer alliance to the company of heaven. Chanting by responses, which is of the first ages, was intended to imitate the choir of angels, which *cry one to another* with alternate adoration. The primitive Christians turned towards the east, in their worship, to signify their respect to the true light of the world. They set up candles in their churches as a sign of their illumination by the gospel: and evergreens are still placed there at Christmas, to remind us that a new and perpetual spring of immortality is restored to us, even in the middle of winter, by the coming of Jesus Christ. The *Cross*, as a *sign* of the Christian profession, hath been in use from the first ages of the gospel.

This affection to symbols in religious worship may be carried too far, and degenerate into theatrical scenery or even into idolatry, (for idols are no other than symbols :) but to cast them all off, and strip religious worship naked, is an act of fanatical ignorance, which understands neither the sense of ceremonies, nor the nature of man ; whose mind in its present state must either raise itself by the help of sensible objects and bodily gestures, or be in danger of sinking into sullenness and stupidity.

Thus have the use of symbols extended to all
times

times, and wisdom hath been communicated in this form by the teachers of every science and profession. We might wonder if it were not so ; when God, from the beginning of the world, taught man after this form ; setting life and death before him under the symbols of two trees ; and it is both an ingenious and a sublime sentiment in a certain author, that the whole scenery of paradise was disposed into an hieroglyphical school for the instruction of the first man ; and that the same plan, so far as it could be, was afterwards transferred to the tabernacle and temple.

END OF THE LECTURES

*On the Figurative Language of the
Holy Scriptures.*

A
DISCOURSE
ON THE
USE AND INTENTION
OF SOME
REMARKABLE PASSAGES
OF THE
Scripture,
NOT COMMONLY UNDERSTOOD.

ADDRESSED TO THE
READERS OF A COURSE OF LECTURES
ON THE
FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE.

BY WILLIAM JONES, M. A.

1930

1931

1932

1933

1934

1935

1936

1937

1938

P R E F A C E.

IN a course of lectures on the *figurative language of the Scripture* (a work which has two characters, according to the fate of all my writings) the tenth lecture treats of the miracles of our Saviour, as *signs* of his saving power upon the *souls* of men; which, to common readers, appear only as miraculous cures wrought upon their bodies. My plan is not complete unless something be added on other signs and significant actions and events, which frequently occur in the Old and New Testament, and are little noticed in these days, though
the

the early writers of the Christian church were not unacquainted with them.

A *sign* is a kind of prophecy, which speaks by things and actions instead of words. When the Jews demanded a sign of Christ*, they meant some miracle ; to shew, by an act of divine power, the truth of his divine mission ; but he gave them a sign of the prophetic sort, such as I am now speaking of, the sign of the prophet Jonah, swallowed by the fish ; of which kind of sign they seemed to have no knowledge ; and I have reason to think there are many Christians who know as little about them as the Jews did, and suppose authors to be scarcely in their senses when they treat of them. But all the signs of the Scripture are excellent, if we have a key to them, and will give both delight and edification to people of devout affections.

It hath been shewed, in the second and third lectures, that the great use of Nature, in the hand of God, is to instruct man ; and, from
the

* Matthew xii. 38.

the works of Nature, give him a right understanding of such things as are above Nature ; and the matter is beyond dispute, because the fact speaks for itself. Yet, to my astonishment, this is denied, and even scouted by learned men, who profess a critical judgment of all literary productions ; though this sublime and delightful method of teaching is notorious throughout the Old and New Testament. But, alas ! when they think they see what they call *Hutchinsonian*, though it be exactly what Christians knew and taught above a thousand years ago, gentlemen are seized with such fears and suspicions as do not become wise men ; falsely (and I may say, *weakly* in those who ought to know better) ascribing things to *Hutchinson*, which were borrowed from *Origen*. Let any candid man open his eyes, and look into the Bible : he will there discover, that the visible world is a school, in which God teaches us by earthly things the nature of heavenly, as Christ taught Nicodemus. But the Christian, with a mind and an education similar to those of Nicode-

mus, will see nothing of all this ; for which I heartily pity him, because I am sure he suffers a great loss. To what purpose, O man, doth the sun shine upon thee, unless it teach thee to know more truly the Sun of Righteousness, and to rejoice in his light? If not, the sun shines upon thee, as upon beasts and reptiles, to give light to thy body, but none to thy understanding. Whereas the salvation of man, by Jesus Christ, is so great, so inestimable a subject, that the goodness of God throws every thing in our way, which may bring it to our minds, and recommend it to our affections. For this, the sun shines, the winds blow, the grass grows, the springs water the earth, the rain falls from heaven. But it is in the study of the Scripture, as in other sciences, all things are not equally obvious, nor will they appear of equal concern to different people ; and there are those who may think I have been throwing away my thoughts, in exploring things too minute and obscure to be understood. When we use a microscope, to examine the minute objects of the creation,

ignorant

ignorant minds may think we are idly employed, and that our objects are insignificant because they are small; but whoever shall examine small things, will find them full of wonders; and that God is every where great in the smallest of his works; agreeably to that wise observation of *Pliny*, *Rerum natura tota est nusquam magis quam in minimis*, his power and providence are as manifest in the œconomy of an insect, as in the revolutions of an empire. The philosopher sees wonders in Nature, which the multitude pass by with unconcern; and the botanist explores minutely what others trample under their feet. The wisest and the most inquisitive, with the utmost of their application, can see but a part of the works of God; and the most studious reader can understand but a part of his word; among the treasures of which, as in the bowels of the earth, there are gems and precious ores, which lie so deep, that they have never been disturbed by the hand of man. We can produce only so far as we can penetrate; and when we have

done our best, the work will not be acceptable to every mind ; so far from it, that I dare not yet trust the following Discourse with the public ; among whom there are too many persons, like the Jews of old, whose eyes if we attempt to open, we shall increase their blindness ; and I know, from the experience of my past life, how critical and tender the case is. Such persons I do not mean to hurt, and I should be sorry to offend them. I, therefore, print this Discourse, with a desire, that it should fall into the hands of those only who are prepared, by what they have already seen in the other lectures, to give it due consideration.

A learned and judicious friend (now with God) whose prudence, in my estimation, was almost oracular, had a sight of all the lectures before their publication, and preferred this, in some respects, to the rest ; but advised me not to publish it with them at first, lest evil-minded people should take advantage from it, to bring the whole plan into disrepute ; but to reserve it till the rest had been considered, and then to let

let it be seen by my readers. I took the former part of his advice twelve years ago, and now I think the time is come when I may take the latter ; imploring the Divine blessing on what I now commit to the press ; that, as we see more intimately into the ways of God, we may daily love him more, and serve him better.
Amen.

A

DISCOURSE, &c.

MANY good Christians, who read the word of God with a desire to profit by it, and have been taught, that *whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning* (Rom. xv. 4.), have their doubts concerning the use of many things they find in the Scripture ; not being able to see how they can answer that general design of adding to our *learning*, and thereby leading us to more *patience and comfort*. The apostle takes a passage from the psalms of David, and understands Jesus Christ to be the speaker of it ; and lest we should wonder or be offended at this use of the Scripture, he tells us the rule is general, that the things written aforetime are to be thus applied to Jesus Christ ; without
which

which they are nothing to us as Christians, neither shall we find in them the comfort they were intended to give. In the way I shall take of illustrating this doctrine, I shall bring strange things to the ears of some people, and such as they will never be able to receive; yet others, who will receive them, and be edified by them, as primitive Christians were, ought to have a sight of them.

I once met with a person, a clergyman of no mean learning, who, not having observed how things are related to one another in the great plan of redemption, objected to the use of the *Magnificat*, in the service of the church, as a form that could have no relation to us. The virgin Mary, he said, being the mother of Christ, might very properly use the words of that hymn; but that they could not belong to us, nor be used by us, with any propriety. To this it was answered, that as Jesus Christ did not come into the world for the purpose of making the virgin Mary a mother, but to save mankind, every Christian soul has reason to rejoice with her. Christ, who was formed in the blessed virgin, is also formed in us*; and the mother of Christ, like Sarah, the mother of the promised seed, in her spiritual capacity, is

T 4

a figure

* Gal. iv. 19.

a figure of the church, that blessed Jerusalem, which is the *mother of us all*: so that the words, which were spoken by her, may be used by all Christians, with the utmost truth and propriety. Each of us may truly, *My soul doth magnify the Lord*, for he, who regarded the virgin, did regard her for my salvation ; that Christ might be formed in me, as he was in her. He that sent away the rich, and accepted a lowly maiden, hath cast off and sent empty away the proud Jews, and condescended to regard and magnify us poor Gentiles. When the promise, made to the church of Israel in our father Abraham, was fulfilled to the blessed virgin, it was fulfilled to us, that is, to the *seed of Abraham for ever*, which seed are we at this day. Thus is the *magnificat* brought home to us, and the use of it in the church, to the end of the world, is justified.

This example sheweth us, how it may be true, that no Scripture is of any *private interpretation* ; that a fact, when recorded in the Scripture, does not *end* in the private parties of whom it is told, but *belongs to us and to our children* *, and is to be applied to something *beyond itself* †. When the goodness of God is acting for the benefit of some of his saints,

* Deut. xxix. 29.

† 2 Pet. i. 20.

saints, and (as inexperience might suppose) for the benefit of them only, his foreknowledge is acting for us all, and a record of the matter becomes *prophetical*. Many passages, therefore, of the Scripture, when properly understood, and discreetly applied according to the rule of the apostle, will turn out to be highly significant, even though they may seem at first sight to have no relation to us; and, in some cases, even to contradict the laws of divine wisdom and justice.

I shall now produce some examples: and, that this may be done in an orderly manner, I shall begin with the case of our father Abraham. We read that he had a son by an Egyptian bond-maid, whose name was *Hagar*; which thing, though contrary to the moral or social law of God, is yet perfectly agreeable to the laws of his providence and the sense of his promises. The apostle has, therefore, treated of this case without any censure; instructing us that the whole is an *allegory*, a prophetic transaction: that in the two persons of *Sarah* and *Hagar* we are to see the two characters of the spiritual and the temporal Jerusalem: and from the conditions and characters of their two children Isaac and Ishmael, we are to learn how it was to be with the natural and
spiritual

spiritual seed of Abraham. The allegory is in force to this day. The children of the bond-woman, who were under the yoke of the law, are even now in that state of servitude, to which they were cast out, along with their mother the Jewish church ; and the Gentiles, as the children of the promise, are now admitted to dwell as inheritors in the house of their Father. The case of Abraham's concubinage, thus applied, is still teaching us the will of God concerning Jews and Gentiles, and will continue to do so as long as Jerusalem shall be trodden down, and the Christian church shall consist of converts taken from the Heathen world. The act of Abraham, in taking a bond-woman, can never be drawn into a precedent, because no man can be in his circumstances, standing in a prophetic character, as the progenitor of two orders of people, a carnal and a spiritual Israel, the sons of his nature and the sons of his faith, and furnishing us with an allegory, which has been fulfilling in its several parts for more than half the age of this world.

The fraud of Jacob, in obtaining the blessing from his elder brother, is to be accounted for as a prophetic act, under which we have a figure of the Gentiles, as the younger brother,

ther, supplanting the Jews, and taking from them that spiritual inheritance which they knew not how to value. The case of Jacob and Esau would admit of an extensive application in all its circumstances. The elder brother is a man of a worldly spirit, and obtains a temporal establishment; while the younger leads a wandering life, as a stranger upon earth, under terrors for himself, and his family, and his flock, from worldly power; all of which was fulfilled in the different tempers and fortunes of the Jews and the Christians. The Jew is still saying in his heart, with the profane Esau, *what profit shall this birthright do to me*; and so takes the provision this world affords for his hope and inheritance, and commonly gets a plentiful share of it.

The *polygamy* of Jacob is to be considered as another act, in which the allegory is still carried on; and as such it is no precedent for any man to take a plurality of wives. Jacob, whose name is Israel, is the father, or head, under whom the church was formed, which still bears the name of the *Israel of God*. The twelve patriarchs might have been raised up, if it had so pleased God, from one wife; but they were born of several; of the bond and the free, the ill-favoured and the beautiful, to foreshew the
4 different

different characters of which the church of God should be composed in different times. In Leah the elder, less beloved and tender eyed, we have the person of the Jewish church, first taken, but not able to see by faith the mysteries of the Gospel. In Rachel, we see a wife well-beloved, as the Christian church was afterwards to be; at first barren, as Sarah also had been before; but at length travailing in pain, and bringing forth sons of sorrow and affliction. Rachel is accordingly represented by the prophet, and the passage is applied by the evangelist, as weeping for those children who first suffered in the cause of Christ. Her spiritual children, by their profession, are in general such as she called that child of which she died, *sons of affliction*: as such they are to consider themselves, and be prepared to act and to suffer in their proper character. As the tender-eyed Leah was, for an appointed time, fraudulently substituted in the place of Rachel, so was the Jewish church, though not the best beloved, taken first in order: to which case those words of the apostle may be applied, *that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual*.

In the lives of the prophets many things are to be found, which seem to be in themselves
either

either superfluous or unaccountable; but when such things are considered as the signs of other future things which are of infinite importance to mankind, they assume a different form, and become worthy of the divine wisdom.

This mode of prophesying by *significant actions* was remarkably used under God's direction in the ministry of the prophet *Ezekiel*; where the judgment on Jerusalem is shewn by the boiling of a pot with its *scum*: the profanation of the sanctuary by the death of the prophet's wife: in which, and other like figurative actions, the prophet *Ezekiel* was *unto them a sign**; and the people, not being able to see the sense of his actions, said, *wilt thou not tell us what these things are to us, that thou doest so?*

On another occasion, the prophet *Jeremiah* was commanded to carry a linen girdle, and hide it in a hole of the earth near the river *Euphrates*; there to lie till it should be rotten†: as a sign, that the people, whom God had taken to be nearest to himself, should be pulled off from him, and carried away, to be hidden and consumed in a remote land.

With these examples before us, we are to learn, that in like things there is a like intention;

* Ch. xxiv: 24.

† Jer. xiii.

tion ; and when we see any thing that appears strange and unaccountable, we may assure ourselves there is some wise reason, and that probably of universal concern, at the bottom ; in which case we are to ask, as the people did of Ezechiél, *what are these things unto us ?* We know that God could have formed Eve of the earth, as he had formed Adam ; but his wisdom acted for our information, that we may know the certainty of those things wherein we have been instructed : he derived the woman from the man, to shew that the church, which like Eve is the *mother of us all*, should derive its existence from Christ, the second Adam ; and particularly from the death of Christ, and from the *side* of Christ, as from the sleep and from the side of Adam. The apostle hath taught us that this affair is to be understood as a *mystery* ; and that, when we speak of Adam and Eve, we speak of *Christ and the Church* in other words. God could have healed Naaman, the Syrian, by a motion of the prophet's hand ; but he sent him to wash, and that in a river of the holy land, even in Jordan, where Christ was to be baptized ; that from this case the Gentiles might afterwards be convinced, how necessary it is for all men, under the leprosy of sin, to be washed by the waters of baptism, sent into all
the

the world from the land of Judea : the story of Naaman is wonderfully instructive in all its circumstances *. Upon another occasion, the prophet made iron to swim, when the head of an axe was lost in a river. How are we to justify the wisdom of God, in recovering a thing of little value by the exercise of a power so extraordinary ? The reason of this, being not in the thing itself, must be found in the use and sense of the thing ; and we must ask here, as the people did on the occasion, when Ezechiel acted in a manner they could not account for, *what are these things unto us ?* When this miracle is examined according to the rule of faith, we see in it a pledge of our own recovery from the consequences of the Fall, by the power of Christ's death and resurrection. For let us mark the circumstances, and they will speak for themselves †. The sons of the prophets complain of dwelling in a place too strait for them ; and, as they are at work for their own enlargement, the head of an axe falls from its helve into the river Jordan ; and the loss was the worse because it was borrowed : *Alas, master,* said the workman to the prophet, *for it was borrowed !* The prophet, having cut down a stick of wood, casts it in at the place ; with which the iron swims, and

* 2 Kings v. † 2 Kings i. 6.

and the man recovers what he had lost. Upon this case let us venture thus to argue, after the manner of the primitive Christians, and we shall not be far from the truth. As the head of the axe, the better part of it, was lost in the water, so did the soul or spirit of man, the better part of him, fall into death the very day on which he undertook to enlarge and improve his condition: and when man loses his soul, he loses what is not *his own*, but that for which he is accountable to God, who hath trusted it to his free will; and, if lost upon a vain experiment, he must be accountable for it, and hath just reason to bewail the obligation he is under. For when the soul of man is lost and sunk, no human power can recover it. As surely as iron rests at the bottom of a deep river, so surely must the soul of man remain for ever under the dominion of death. But as the prophet, by casting in wood, which swims of its own nature, brought up the iron with it, so doth the Son of Man *draw all men unto himself*: the branch of the stem of Jesse was cut down, and cast with us into the waters of death: but as wood, if thrown to the bottom of a river, will rise up again, so could death have no power over him. And thus are we, when sunk and lost, raised up to life by the power of his resurrection upon

us.

us. When considered in this way, the power exercised by the prophet gives us as true and philosophical a pattern of the miracle of our salvation, as the whole circle of nature can afford: and as such I have often reflected upon the case with admiration and pleasure not to be expressed *.

When the widow cried unto the prophet in behalf of herself and her two sons, who were seized by the creditor for bond-men, he could have found means of paying their debt, without multiplying a vessel of oil by a miracle †: but then, our faith would not have been able to learn from the story, how the two sons of the church, the Jews and the Gentiles, are redeemed from the bondage of sin and death by Jesus Christ, the great prophet; to whom the *spirit* was given *without measure*, as the oil was given to that inexhaustible vessel, and of whose fullness we have all received. St. Augustin has an excellent discourse upon all the circumstances of this miracle, and applies them as every other commentator will do, who has the Scripture ready in his mind, and interprets by the same rule.

VOL. IV.

U

By

* Compare what hath been here said with the interpretation of *Irenæus*, lib. v. 17.

† 2 Kings 4.

By a miracle of like sense and signification, did our blessed Saviour pay tribute for himself and his disciple from the mouth of a fish *which came first out of the sea* *, I have a notion of my own, for which I can produce no authority of any commentator, that the three orders of animals, the fowls of the air, the beasts of the earth, and the fishes of the sea, represent three states of *being* : the fowls of the air, the angelic or spiritual nature, both bad and good ; the land animals, the present state of man's life ; the fish of the sea, the state of the dead, who are silent and invisible. This may appear strange and visionary to those who have not considered it : but, if the distinction is founded on the Scripture, then the fish, that *first cometh up*, is he that first cometh up from the dead, as Christ did ; the *first fruits of them that slept* : and as he rose for *our justification*, he brought with him our ransom, to be paid for those who have no tribute-money of their own to give. With this sense, the case was worthy of the divine interposition.

There is another miracle of our Saviour, which, when considered in itself, as it stands in the letter of the history, is very difficult, and hath perplexed many commentators ; but is easily

* Matt. xvii. 27.

easily reconciled, if we take it in its undoubted signification. In the way to Jerusalem our Lord saw a fig-tree, which had nothing but leaves upon it when he wished for fruit; and he pronounced sentence upon it; in consequence of which it soon withered away*. Now a fig-tree is no object of a curse, unless it be for a sign or figure; least of all could this fig-tree be so, because, as the history adds, *it was not yet the season of figs* †; had it been so, they would have been gathered, in which case no fruit could have been expected, and then the tree had not been proper for the use he intended to make of it, as a *sign* of the character and fate of the Jewish church. He was returning in displeasure from Jerusalem, where he had observed the unprofitable state of the people, whose religion was now reduced to a form of words, without any good works; as a fig-tree having leaves but no fruit: and from this example it was to be understood, that, as the fig-tree withered away, so should the fruitless Jerusalem perish. Its fate is elsewhere

U 2

signified

* Mark xi. 13, 21.

† A fig-tree with us has always figs upon it in some stage or other. If it was not the *time of figs*, they had not yet been gathered; so the tree should have had its fruit upon it.

signified under the parable of a fruitless fig-tree *, visited for three years (the term of our Lord's ministry among the Jews) and then, after another short trial, to be cut down as an incumbrance to the ground. The parable and the miracle are of the same interpretation. They have long been fulfilled upon the Jews ; but they are applicable at all times, in the moral of them, to those persons who bring forth no fruit under the means of divine grace ; whose end will be to wither away and be cast out of the vineyard.

I cannot leave this subject of the miracles without mentioning one more from the Old Testament. How often have the profane and ignorant made themselves merry with the ass of Balaam ! We must, indeed, confess, that God could have rebuked the apostacy of Balaam, without opening the eyes of a brute beast to see the heavenly minister of vengeance, whom a mercenary prophet could not see ; and to remonstrate against his wickedness with an human voice : but the time was to come, when the eyes of the Heathen world were to be opened, and their voice to condemn the mercenary Jews, who should make themselves the messengers and hirelings of an idolatrous power to
bring

* Luke xiii. 7.

bring destruction upon the Christian church. And as Balaam, by his own confession, *fell away with his eyes open*, so did the Jews offend against their own knowledge; while, at the same time, they bore testimony against themselves by maintaining the writings of the Holy Scripture. It was not more contrary to the nature of things, that an ass should see an angel, whom a perverse prophet could not see, than that blind Gentiles should be alarmed and brought to repentance by the preaching of the Gospel; while the perverse Jews, with the word of prophecy in their possession, should see nothing; but beat and abuse those who saw more than themselves: and if the sword of power had been in their hands, they would have killed every Christian upon earth.

I have now some observations to add on *figurative occurrences*, providentially ordained, and recorded for our instruction. Many events related in the Scripture are of such a wonderful character, that they carry with them natural marks of their own truth; and are thereby distinguished from the events recorded in all the histories of the world. To those who have ears to hear, they speak that sense in sign and figure which they relate in words. It is impossible to explain this without examples: and there are

certainly more to be found than I can here produce, or would presume to understand. As there are many wonders in Nature, into which no eye can penetrate, so can we discern but in part the manifold wisdom of God in the inexhaustible treasures of his word.

Such occurrences, as I am about to produce, are no where more observable and abundant than in the history of our Saviour's birth, and of his passion. His birth was witnessed by the appearance of a new star; to signify that a new light was come into the world, such as had never appeared before: and it was observed, and followed by wise men from the East, as a prelude to his reception by the Gentiles; while the people of his own country saw nothing, and when he came had no room for him. All the disadvantageous circumstances, under which the blessed Infant was found, prevented not the adoration of those men, who had been conducted to him by this heavenly light; as no offence will be taken against any part of the Christian plan by those whom the grace of God hath guided to it, and who see his word as a new light risen upon the world.

Our Saviour was born *upon a journey*, and at an *inn*; to shew, that he was to be a *stranger* and a *sojourner upon earth*, as *all his fathers*,
the,

the holy patriarchs, were before him ; and as all his disciples are called to be after him.

Shepherds, watching their flocks in the field by night, were selected as proper persons to receive the glad tidings of his birth. Their office represents that of the ministers of God, who are to make known abroad what is told them from heaven : and those shepherds will always have the preference, who are found in their office, watching over their flocks.

Even the time of the year in which our Saviour was born was not without its meaning. This happened on the night when the sun passed the winter solstice, and was returning to bring back the increasing light of the spring. The birth of John the Baptist had happened six months earlier ; at the season when the sun begins to shorten the days, and his light is daily decreasing. These two seasons are respectively agreeable to the characters of the two persons, and the event of their ministry : with a view to which, it was predicted of both by the Baptist himself, *he must increase, but I must decrease**.

If we go from the season of his birth to that of his passion, most of the circumstances, preparatory to it and attending it, have their propriety and signification : of which one single

U 4

fact

* John iii. 30.

fact will be sufficient to convince us. For, as his birth was witnessed by a new star lighted up in the heavens ; so at his passion the light of the day was extinguished at noon, and gave its testimony, that He was the *true light* who was then expiring upon the cross at Jerusalem.

The disciples were directed to the house where the passover of the Lord's supper was to be eaten, by *a man bearing a pitcher of water**, whom they were to follow, and where he entered they were to enter and make ready. The same direction will serve to the end of the world : for where the water of baptism is found with the living waters of the word and spirit of God, there is the house of God, and there are his mysteries to be celebrated : as, on the other hand, where there is no baptism, there is no church, nor can be any supper of the Lord.

The agony of our Saviour *in a garden*, and the treason of Judas there committed, and his burial in a garden, where he appeared after his resurrection, and was taken for the gardener of the place, are so many natural signs, which refer us back to the garden where that sin began, which brought him to his sufferings. The wood of his cross, which is called *a tree*†, upon which he *bare our sins*, answers to the fatal
tree

* Mark xiv. 13.

† 1 Pet. ii. 24.

tree of Paradise which brought sin into the world: the one tree was the instrument of our ruin, the other of our salvation. It was, therefore, ordained, that Jesus Christ should suffer death under the Roman power, and not under the Jewish. When the Jews refused to put him to death in their own way, (which would have been by *stoning*) out of flattery to the Roman governor they ignorantly contributed to the great plan of Providence, and proved Jesus Christ to be the true Saviour, who died for Adam's sin. Thus will it ever happen: the perverse ways of man shall fulfil the righteous designs of God. The crown of *thorns*, which they put upon his head, was another mark to the same effect, and shewed him to be the person upon whom the *curse* of our sin was transferred. This case is singular; the history of mankind does not inform us that this act of cruel mockery was ever practised upon any other sufferer, except of late, amidst the murderous executions in that devoted country, France; where, as we are told, one poor sufferer was crowned with thorns, and treated with the indignities peculiar to the death of Jesus Christ.

The whole race of mankind, for whom Christ suffered, are divided into the two parties of Jews and Gentiles; frequently signified by two

individual persons. To represent these, two malefactors suffered with him ; of whom one, a pattern of the Gentiles, repented of his error, glorified a suffering Saviour, and received a promise of being taken into Paradise : while the other, like the Jews, went on reviling him, and, in the insolent language of the Jews, bade him *save himself*. The rending of the veil of the temple, when he gave up the ghost, was a sign that his death was the removing of that partition which excludes man from the residence of God, and *opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers*. As to the place or spot on which he suffered death, we suppose it to have happened on that very mountain (*Moriah*) where Isaac had been offered up by Abraham, as a prelude to his death and resurrection ; according to the words of a prophecy founded on that event, which strictly signify, *in this mountain the Lord will provide* * ; i. e. will provide that true lamb for a sacrifice, which shall take away the sins of the world. Certain it is, his death happened *without the gate* of Jerusalem, as the sacrifice was carried *without the camp* to be burned ; to shew, in a figure, how he should be rejected as an alien and an outcast by his own people, and delivered over to the Gentiles. The apostle, in
his

* Gen. xxii. 14.

his epistle to the Hebrews, hath thus applied this circumstance of our Saviour's death; grounding upon it this important lesson, that we must prepare ourselves to be rejected as he was, and *go to him without the camp**, bearing the like reproach of being cast out by the world for his sake, as he was for ours.

As the lights of Heaven had borne their testimony to his birth and his death; so did nature still correspond with his resurrection. He rose from the dead at the springing of the morning, when the day-light was going to appear: on which consideration the rising of every morning should remind us of Christ's resurrection, and of our own deliverance from the grave, when the day of life shall dawn upon us.

When Christ was apprehended by his enemies in the garden, in consequence of the treason of Judas, a remarkable occurrence fore-shewed to the spectators what the event should be; that is, how these indignities should terminate in his resurrection. At the time when he was seized, to be led away to the high priest, this singular circumstance is related by St. Mark, that he was followed by a *certain young man, with a linen cloth cast about his naked body*, (who he was, or whence he came, it is not said) and that, when

* Heb. xiii. 13.

when the enemies of Jesus laid hold of him, he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked. —Thus it fell out in the case of Jesus himself: he was laid hold of, and every measure was taken to prevent his escape, even from death itself: but when the linen cloth was cast about his naked body, he left it behind him in the sepulchre, and fled naked from those who had seized him.

Much learning may be derived from other circumstances, which I can but briefly mention. The coat of Christ was without a seam: it was, therefore, not rent into parts; to shew, that the Christian church should be of one piece throughout; with the same mind, the same doctrines, and the same worship. A division of the garment denotes a separation of the people; as Samuel interpreted when Saul rent the mantle of the prophet; *the Lord*, said he, *hath rent the kingdom from thee this day*. All who pretend to have put on Christ should wear this seamless garment; they should be possessed by a spirit of uniformity, and be studious to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace and of Christian charity.

The preference given to Barabbas, a thief and a murderer, should warn us of what often hath happened, and often will happen; that
treason,

treason, sedition, and murder shall, on certain occasions, when it pleases God to introduce confusion and misery, find better acceptance with the people, and with those who mislead them, than the excellent doctrine and exemplary patience of Jesus Christ, which do not accord with the mistaken views of worldly and ambitious men ; who are more nearly allied to Belial, the dæmon of discord, than to the God of peace and order.

From the apparently helpless condition of Christ at his death, it was argued, that God had forsaken him, and that he might be taken and persecuted with impunity : so do the wicked promise themselves, that the cause of his church and his religion is impotent in itself, because God gives the power for a time to those who mock at, and trample upon it. But the triumph of the wicked is short. The time soon came, when *the king sent forth his armies and destroyed those murderers, the Jews, and burnt up their city, Jerusalem.* So shall they all perish, and their habitation shall be laid waste, and the earth they live upon shall be burnt up, who now indulge themselves in the contempt of Christianity.

The departure of Christ from this world was in such a form as gave us a sign of his future
appearance

appearance in judgment, and how it shall be. A cloud took him from us into heaven ; and a cloud shall bring him to us again : he shall *so* come as he was seen to go : whence we have that warning in the Revelation, *behold he cometh with clouds !* In that awful day, they will be best pleased to meet him, who now in this life, while, through those clouds, we behold him with the eye of Faith, adore his character, and love his church, and study his wisdom, and delight in his truth, and keep his commandments.

FOUR LECTURES
ON THE
EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL
TO THE
HEBREWS;
SHEWING THE HARMONY BETWEEN THE
MYSTERIES, DOCTRINES, AND MORALITY
OF THE
OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT.



LECTURE I.

ON THE CHARACTER AND OFFICES OF THE
SON OF GOD, AS THEY ARE SET FORTH IN
THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

WE read, in the 24th chapter of St. *Luke's* gospel, that as two of the disciples were walking to *Emmaus*, on the day of Christ's resurrection, an unknown person joined them on the way, and entered into discourse with them. After some questions had passed between them, this unknown person (who was no other than Jesus himself) began to shew them, how all the circumstances, so lately fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, had been foreshewn in the scripture: and, *beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things*
VOL. IV. X *concerning*

concerning himself. Who can read this without wishing to have overheard that *expository* discourse, which, as the disciples said of it afterwards, made their *hearts burn within them*? Such a discourse is the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, to those whose hearts are open to understand it; not conceived in the same words, perhaps, nor laid down exactly in the same method; but consisting of the same matter, and all tending to produce the same effect.

All the doctrine contained in this epistle relates to one or other of these three heads;

First, to the *Person* of the *Son of God*, as it had been described in the Old Testament.

Secondly, to the *Religion* of the *Gospel*, as being the same under both Testaments.

Thirdly, to the *Church* of Israel, as a figure of the Church of Christ.

Under the first of these heads, I shall extract and arrange the doctrine of the Old Testament relating to the person of the Son of God; taking the *Epistle to the Hebrews* as my authority: wherein the apostle begins with shewing the divine character of the Son of God, as distinct from, and superior to, the nature of *Angels*; those invisible and exalted beings, who are between the nature of men and the nature of God.

For, first, his name is greater than theirs; it
being

being said to him, never to them, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee**. And, secondly, he is an object of worship to angels—when he bringeth in his first begotten into the world, he saith†, *and let all the angels of God worship him*. And farther, he is celebrated in the Psalms as the King of heaven, and the Creator of the world—*Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever—Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth*: &c. these things are said, as the apostle witnesses, *to the Son*; who being also commanded to *sit at the right hand of God*, which was never said to any angel, his person was not of a created angelic nature, as the Hebrews might suppose, who had been used to that term in Moses and the prophets (and perhaps took it generally in such a sense) but strictly divine, and himself the Lord and God of men and angels, the coassessor of the Father in glory everlasting.

Such indeed is the character of the Son in the Hebrew scriptures, that it is the same in all respects with those titles which the apostle subjoins to his name in the second verse of this first chapter: *whom* (saith he) *God hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, who being the brightness of his glory,*

x 2

and

* Chap. i. 5.

† Chap. vi.

and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Great as these expressions are, they are the same in substance with what the Old Testament had declared before concerning the Son of God ; who being called the *Glory of God*, has that relation to him which the light that comes down from heaven has to the sun, from whence it proceeds; who being truly the Son, is consequently the heir of God ; who now sustains that world of which he at first laid the foundations; who purged the sins of man *by himself*, who was the creator of man ; and when he sat down at the right hand of God, returned to that majesty which was essential to his character before the world was made.

Nothing can be more full and express than the language the apostle uses in this chapter, to convince the Hebrews, that the term *Son of God*, as applied to the person of Christ, is not a name of accommodation, as sometimes taken in other applications of it, but a name, the excellence of which comes to him, not by adoption, but *by inheritance*, that is, by a natural right, which could not be, unless the Son were of the same nature with the Father.

As

As the apostle proceeds to treat of the person of Christ, he takes occasion to shew from the 8th Psalm, (and thereby teaches us how to understand that Psalm) that he, who, as God, was above all the angels of heaven, as man was made *lower than the angels*, that he might taste of death for every man, and so *bring many sons unto glory*, by receiving glory in our nature, as the reward of his sufferings. In virtue of his incarnation, we are become the sons of God and brethren of Christ; as he was in all things made like unto his brethren, his brethren will in all things be made like unto him; that is, they will be imputed by a new relation to the same Father, with a legal right to the same inheritance, and be crowned with glory and honour after their sufferings upon earth.

The divine and human natures of the Son of God being thus settled and distinguished, we are now to consider him with the apostle under the three characters he took upon him for the salvation of the world.

1. As Moses, he was to be a *teacher, law-giver, and prophet*; and Moses had acted as a minister of God *for a testimony of these things which were to be spoken after** by a greater than Moses.

x 3

2. Like

* Chap. iii. 5.

2. Like *Aaron* and *Melchizedec* he was to be a high priest and intercessor ; a minister of the true sanctuary.

3. As *Joshua*, whose name is called *Jesus* in this epistle, he was to be the *captain of our salvation*, to conquer our spiritual enemies, and put us into possession of the heavenly Canaan.

From all these figurative characters of the old law, it was foreshewn, that he should be the greatest of prophets, the greatest of priests, and the greatest of conquerors. And first he is to be understood as a prophet or teacher.

The apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house * : to which the apostle adds, that he was thus faithful *for a testimony* ; his ministry was prophetic, and bore witness in all the principal circumstances of it to the greater ministry of Christ, who was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, because he was the master and builder of that house, in which Moses was no more than a servant. The fidelity of Moses, under all the various trials of his ministry, is the circumstance here selected by the apostle, and chiefly insisted on ; but there was scarcely a circumstance attending his whole character which did not afford some *testimony* to the ministry

* Chap. iii. 1.

nistry of Christ. The general character of both is the same, in that they were *prophets*; and as the one is said to be *mighty in word and deed**, so is the other. The *deeds* of Moses were great beyond those of any other prophet, Christ excepted. We see him working wonders amongst a proud and obstinate people, whose hearts were hardened against him; as Christ wrought his miracles amongst the blinded Jews, who never believed on him at last: and as Egypt was at length fearfully judged by the hand of Moses, so were the Jews cast out and destroyed in a terrible manner, when the time of vengeance came upon them, which Christ had threatened. As Moses left Pharaoh in wrath, never to see his face any more, so Christ left the Jews at their own desire, never more to meet with them but in judgment, when Jerusalem should be overthrown.

In their *words* they were so far alike, that both were lawgivers, delivering to the people the precepts which were received from heaven. All the faithful of the Israelitish church were disciples of Moses, and did as he had commanded them; as the faithful of the latter days are followers of Christ, and observers of his laws.

* Comp. Acts, vii. 22. with Luke xxiv. 19.

But most remarkable was the *fidelity* of both these teachers, in persisting on the part of God, in opposition to the powers of this world, and the malice of their own people. *When Moses was come to years, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season* *. As the one rejected the pleasures of Pharaoh's court, so the other withstood the solicitations of the ambitious Jews, refusing to be made a king, and rejecting all the kingdoms of the world when they were offered to him. Each of them exposed themselves to reproach and hatred, for maintaining the authority of God, and acting in his name. This is pointed out to us in many remarkable observations of the first martyr, *St. Stephen*, in his apology against the Jews. *This*, says he, *is that Moses, whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them.* When he first offered himself to his own people as a deliverer, they received him not, but affronted him with that insolent question, *Who made thee a ruler and a judge?* When he pleaded the cause of God, all the congregation murmured at him, as the Jews hated Christ for his exhortations to obedience: corrupt

* Chap. xi. 24.

rupt scribes, pharisees, and chief priests, rose up against him, as Moses was opposed and railed at by a self-sanctified party, headed by *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*. The opposition therefore that was raised against Jesus Christ, and all the affronts put upon him, though they might make him seem little in the eyes of the Jews, brought his character to a conformity with that of their first lawgiver, and to their eternal confusion demonstrated the truth of his mission. And thus argues the first martyr, pressing the Jews with the inference—*This Moses, whom they refused, saying, who made thee a ruler and a judge, the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer*. Persecuted as he was and despised, God sent him and supported him; and they who have persecuted Christ, have only fulfilled what the scriptures foreshewed by the things which had happened to Moses, the first faithful minister of God to the children of Abraham. The church which was brought out of Egypt, was under his œconomy in the wilderness, to be directed in the way, and to be fed and supported as occasion required. The people of God are still travelling through a wilderness, with the second Moses to lead and support them under all the wants, temptations, and dangers of their earthly pilgrimage. By this faithful

faithful guide will the house of God be governed and protected, till the office of Moses shall be superseded by that of Joshua, and he shall put them in possession of the good land which they have now in prospect.

The second capacity in which this epistle sets before us the Son of God, is that of our *great high priest*, signified to us under the figures of the law by the two characters of *Melchizedec* and *Aaron*.

It pleased God from the beginning of the world, as soon as the fall had given occasion to such a dispensation, to *take from among men* some person properly appointed, to make intercession for the rest ; and thereby to keep up the expectation of a divine intercessor, who should make an atonement once for all by a sufficient and eternal sacrifice. The first eminent example the scripture gives us of such a person, is in the character of Melchizedec, who as *priest of the most high God met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the Kings, and blessed him**. His priesthood was prior to that of the Mosaic law, and greater, because, as the apostle argued, Abraham shewed its superiority, by offering to this priest the *tenth* of the spoils, and taking his *blessing*. From Abraham the Levitical

* Chap. vii. 1.

tical priesthood descended; and the children being inferior to the father, and the father inferior to this high priest, it follows that the priesthood of the law was inferior to the priesthood of Melchizedec. From him Abraham received *bread and wine*; and the *oath* of God being the great sanction of the priesthood which administers this sacrament, it is thence evident, that the priesthood of the gospel, which Christ began, and continued and perpetuated, with its offering of bread and wine, is the only true priesthood; earlier than the priesthood of the law in time, and superior to it in dignity. Thus *after the similitude of Melchizedec, there ariseth another priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.* For it appears by the apostles reasoning, that this Melchizedec was no human person; inasmuch as he had no human descent, and it is essential to this order, that its priesthood should be *unchangeable** and eternal.—Whence it must follow, that no mere man could ever be capable of the conditions of such a priesthood. There never could be more than one priest of the order; and that priest is Christ

* The *Greek* means such a priesthood as *doth not pass from one person to another*; so that there can be but one person of that order.

Christ himself ; who, before *the days of his flesh*, exhibited to the Father of the faithful that effectual priesthood, which should save the world ; and made him a partaker of its benefits. All this doctrine the apostle has drawn out of the short account in the book of Genesis concerning the person of Melchizedec, and the oath spoken of in the 110th Psalm relating to his priesthood.

In the person of Aaron, and the priesthood of the law, we have another standing memorial of the priesthood of Christ, which taught the people under a figure, that the true priest should do, once for all, what Aaron and his successors did year by year. The law had a *shadow* of the *good things* that were *to come* by the Gospel ; and all its ceremonies and services were accommodated to shew the necessity and the effects of a better priesthood with better sacrifices. For first, the tabernacle itself was a pattern of an heavenly original : the directions given to Moses for the constructing of it imply that it was no more than a copy ; and thus argues the apostle. *The priests, says he, that offer gifts and sacrifices serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things ; as Moses was admonished of God* (or, according to the Greek, as Moses was divinely informed of God) *when he was about to make the tabernacle ; For, see*
saith

saieth he, *that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.* The heavenly substance of which this tabernacle was the shadow and pattern, is now exhibited to us under the gospel ; and we may trace the lines of the *true tabernacle* if we attend to the form of that which represented it. The first part of the tabernacle, in which the daily ministrations were performed, was a figure of this world, in which temporary and mortal priests perform the services of God. Beyond the vail there was another tabernacle, called the *holiest of all*, or as the Hebrew speaks, the *Holy of Holies*. This sacred place was open only to the high priest, who entered into it with the blood of the yearly sacrifice. When Christ by his death, which rent the vail of the temple, had opened a way into the heavenly sanctuary, then was the truth of this yearly service accomplished, and he passed from officiating as a priest upon earth, to appear with the merits of his blood for us in heaven, before the presence of God. And thus the apostle explains it.—*Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.* In which words it is plainly implied, that he did truly once for all, what
Aaron

Aaron the high priest did every year ; therefore what Aaron did foreshewed what he should do ; and if so, the person of Aaron was a figure of his person. That it was no more than a figure for the time then present, and that Aaron was not the true intercessor, which the people of God were taught to expect, was evident from the repetition of his sacrifices year by year ; which shewed, that of themselves they were ineffectual : every succeeding yearly offering and atonement shewed the inefficacy of what had gone before. Supposing they had answered the end of propitiation, the apostle puts the question, *would they not then have ceased to be offered ? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins**, that is, they might have pleaded in the sight of God the effect of what had passed, if it had been effectual ; but it was repeated continually ; therefore it was not effectual ; it was only *descriptive* or *exhibitory* of that sacrifice, which in the fulness of time should be effectual to the putting away of sin. And this reminds us of the difference between the high priest of the tabernacle, and the high priest of the true sanctuary ; that the latter was both priest and sacrifice. And it was necessary he should be

80 ;

* Chap. x. 2.

so ; for the blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sins : the cattle upon a thousand hills could not make an atonement for one sinner. There is indeed no visible relation, in the eye of human reason, between the death of a sheep and the pardon of sin : but that Christ, a perfect man, the accepted and beloved son of God, should shed his blood to save our souls ; in that there is so much sense, that it is the very *wisdom* and *the power of God*.

It has been made a question, by those who question every thing, whether sacrifices were of divine institution. But sacrifices are *descriptive* ; and as the thing described is the redemption of man by the shedding of the blood of Christ, which never could be known but by revelation ; the supposition, that sacrifice could be of human invention, is an absurdity. It is as if we were to imagine, that words could be invented by those, who had no knowledge of things ; or that *signs* could be brought into use without any prior idea of the *things signified*. The knowledge of a redeemer was first given to man ; and the observation of sacrifice was the expression of that knowledge by a significant act. All mankind were derived from these to whom this knowledge was first given ; and therefore all nations of the world, in all times of the world,

did in some form or other retain the observation of sacrifice, for the putting away of sin.

The third character under which the Son of God was foreshewn to us under the law, is that of a conqueror. As *Joshua*, whose name is also called *Jesus* in the Epistle to the Hebrews, Christ was to become the *captain of our salvation*; to subdue our spiritual enemies, and put us into possession of the heavenly Canaan. The person of Joshua, and his acts, and the effects of his commission, are all descriptive of the things to be accomplished by the *true Jesus*.—He was the successor of Moses, as the gospel cometh after the law; and carried into effect what the law could not accomplish, but only exhibited in prospect; as Moses died on Mount Nebo, with only a distant view of the Holy Land. After the death of Moses, a new generation of people, under the command of Joshua, were conducted to many signal victories, which opened a way to the promised inheritance, that *rest* which was to put a period to their wanderings in the wilderness. As the Saviour of the Hebrews, he was honoured with that very name which was afterwards given to him, who came *after Moses*, to be the *Saviour of the world*. Joshua knew the excellence of that country

* Chap. iv. 8.

country to which he was leading the people, and encouraged them to press forward to the enjoyment of it, through all the dangers of which they were afraid. *The land, says he, is an exceeding good land: if the Lord delight in us then he will bring us into this land and give it us, a land which floweth with milk and honey —fear ye not the people of the land, for they are bread for us; their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us.* And so it came to pass; the mighty inhabitants of the land fled before them, and the walls of Jericho fell down flat, after the priests had encompassed it with the ark, and blown with the rams horns, as they had been commanded. All this was fulfilled at the wonderful propagation of the gospel under the conduct of Jesus Christ. The powers of the world were all against it; but the sound of the gospel from the mouths of the apostles prevailed against them all. Weak and contemptible as the means might appear which God had appointed, the end was answered. Idolatry was overpowered: Satan was cast out of his strong holds, which he had so long possessed in peace; and the *kingdom of the world became the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.*

Here it is a wonderful thing to consider, that

the Canaanitish nations, who possessed the land promised to the people of God, were all Idolaters, or *Gentiles* as they are called, such as the Roman empire and all the kingdoms of the world were before the establishment of Christianity. This circumstance is taken notice of and applied in the apology of St. Stephen against the Jews. *Our fathers*, said he, *had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness—which also our fathers that came after* brought in with Jesus into the possession of the *Gentiles*. The tabernacle of God was transferred to the *Gentiles*, and there established under Joshua ; to signify in a figure, that the church, under Jesus Christ, should be transferred from the Jews to the *Gentiles*. The first set of people who came out of Egypt, rebelled against Moses, and refused to hear the exhortation of Joshua : so they died in their unbelief, and their carcasses were left in the wilderness. But those who *came after* (as *St. Stephen* words it) the successors of that disobedient generation, entered with the tabernacle into the possession of the *Gentiles* ; as the new children of Abraham, who came after the apostate Jews, followed the true Jesus, when his religion was translated into the heathen world.

The time is yet to be expected, when every
power

power of this world and the other shall fall before him. As those wicked Canaanites were driven out of their land, when the measure of their iniquities was filled up; so shall the wicked be driven out of the earth, when that vengeance of God shall overtake them, which they have so long held in contempt and defiance. The world itself shall be surrounded by the Son of God, as the Captain of our Salvation, and the army of saints and angels which shall attend upon him at his coming. The *last trumpet* shall sound, and the world shall be overthrown, as Jericho fell flat, when it had been compassed about seven days by the priests and ministers of God. When the priests blew, as they were commanded, at the time appointed, and all the people *shouted with a great shout*, (Josh. vi. 5.) the fortifications of that proud city sunk at once into a heap of ruins. With reference to which history, we are reminded that *the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout* (1 Thess. iv. 16.) *with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God.*

It pleased the wisdom of God to describe beforehand, in the manner I have now explained to you from the Old Testament, the things relating to the person of the Son of God, as our *Lawgiver*, our *High Priest*, and our *Saviour*;

with the works he was to perform for the redemption of mankind. Wonder not that they were all so particularly delineated by ceremonies, signs, and miracles. They are so great and important, that had they been written in the firmament of heaven as plainly as they are written in the books of Moses and the Prophets, they would have been worthy of it.

THE nature of man being the same now as from the beginning of the world, and the nature of God being unchangeable; it must follow, that the great object of the dispensations of God to man must be the same in every age; though the form and manner after which that object is pursued may be different: so that what *God spake in former times to the fathers by the prophets* will be found the same in sense and effect with what he *spoke in the last days by his Son*; though he spoke *in divers manners*, as occasion might require *at sundry times*. This is a matter of the utmost consequence; and it is what I propose to shew you in the present

Y 3

lecture;

lecture; namely, that it was the design of St. Paul, in his Epistle to the *Hebrews*, to teach them that the religion of the people of God is, for substance and intention, the same under both Testaments.

This I shall prove from two general reasons, and afterwards from some particular ones.

My first general reason is this; that religion has the same name under the two dispensations of Moses and of Jesus Christ: it is called *the Gospel*: for the apostle, speaking of those who were under the teaching of God in the wilderness, says, *unto us was the Gospel preached as well as unto them**; making the religion, delivered to us in the New Testament, but a repetition of what had always been delivered to the Church. The *Gospel* signifies a message from God for the salvation of man; and as such was delivered at sundry times by Moses and the prophets. If the word preached did not profit some, *not being mixed with faith in them that heard it*, this is no argument against the sense or sufficiency of the word itself; it only shews us, that, in all ages of the world, some there have been and will be, who being carnally minded, and wholly attached to this world, are destitute of that principle, which the scripture
calls

* Heb. iv. 2.

calls by the name of *faith* ; and which, as a universal test to the servants of God, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

What I here say leads me to my second general reason, to prove that religion is the same under both Testaments ; and this is, that it has the same general characteristic, or mark, by which it is to be distinguished. If we ask, what was the religion of the Jews, who received the law from Moses ? The answer is plain ; it was a religion which believed things past, and had faith in things to come, expecting the present favour of God from the observation of certain acts of religious worship, as *seeing him that is invisible*. This principle of faith has been the characteristic of the true religion from the beginning of the world. To Adam the generation of the world was an article of faith ; and the effects of the tree of life and the tree of knowledge were no objects of his sight. After the Fall, the expectation of a Saviour, the *seed of the woman*, who should *bruise the head of the serpent*, was another article of faith ; as was also the curse to be executed upon the earth, which the world in the days of Noah had neglected and forgotten. There never was a time when true religion did not believe something past, and expected something to come, and

conform itself to ordinances, the effects of which were of a spiritual nature ; and it is the trial of man in this life, whether he will observe such ordinances, and depend upon them. Adam's dependance was upon the sacramental Tree of Eden. The Patriarchs and Jews depended on the rights of sacrifices and purifications, imposed on them till the times of reformation ; and we are taught, by the example of Abel, that a sacrifice was excepted for the *faith* of him that offered it. Christians now depend on the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper. With regard to the past, they believe that Christ suffered for their sins, and arose from the dead ; and, with regard to the future, that he shall come again to judge the world. The religion of the people of God always was, and always will be, a scheme of *faith* and *dependence* : therefore it is an universal doctrine, common to all ages, which a prophet delivered and an apostle hath confirmed, that *the just shall live by faith* *. Let him be as *just* as he will, his *life* is not from his *justice*, but from his *faith* ; without which, he has nothing of that life which true religion gives ; and is dead in the sight of God. To the same effect, our apostle speaking of Enoch, that according to the testimony

of

* Chap. x. 38.

of the scripture, he *pleased God**; draws an inference in favour of Enoch's faith, because *without faith it is impossible to please him*†. This general principle of faith, while it reconciles and unites the religion of both Testaments, serves to detect every false religion that has been or can be invented; because in such there can be no *faith* properly so called; in as much as it will either have false objects, or none at all.

In the religion of the Gentiles, there was a sort of faith, but it was chiefly directed to objects fabulous and false. The *Mythology* (by which I mean the *religious mysteries*) of the Greeks, gave them a traditionary account of the world's original; of its destruction by the flood; of a future paradise (called *Elysium*) for the virtuous; and a place of torment (called *Tartarus*) for the punishment of departed souls, after a formal trial and condemnation by the judges of the infernal regions; and they preserved the institution of sacrifice; thereby confessing their dependence on invisible powers for the expiation of sin. They also maintained the doctrine of man's natural blindness and impotence without the assistance and inspiration of their deities, for which they never failed to invoke

* Gen. v. 22, and Eccles. xliv. 16. † Chap. xi. 6.

voke them in their compositions and great undertakings. Modern times have been refining upon the reformation, till by degrees they have conceived and brought forth a sort of philosophical religion, distinct from every thing the world had seen before ; because it is *a religion without faith*. The scheme of our *Deists*, as they call themselves, has nothing in it of things past ; no fact or tradition to ground itself upon : it has no sacraments, nor services of any kind, to keep up an intercourse with heaven ; it expects no predicted judgment, and has no particular view of any thing after this life. Thus having no objects of faith, it teaches no dependence, which alone renders the most just man acceptable to God. It actually inculcates *independence*, and glories in it : it has neither church nor sacraments, nor religious worship, nor allegiance, nor submission to God or man ; and therefore, it comes more nearly up to the wishes of the Devil, the great author and first father of independence, than any religion ever professed in the world before. If dependence upon God be the characteristic of a religious man, then it must be better to believe the labours of *Hercules*, the future judgment of *Rhadamanthus*, and to do sacrifice to *Jupiter*, than to be of this persuasion ; because the worst religion,

4.

religion, professed in natural ignorance and sincerity, must be preferable to that proud and incorrigible ignorance, which wilfully rejects all the religion in the world.

From the two general reasons I have now given you, it appears, that the law and the gospel are the same religion under different forms: for they have the same *name*, and are distinguished by the same *character*; that is, by the great principle of *faith*, which is essential to both. To these two general reasons, I shall now subject as many particular ones as are necessary, from the Epistle under our consideration; in all of which it is required of me to shew, that as the *principle* of faith is common to both Testaments, so the *articles* of faith were in general the same.

I. We have seen already, that the Son of God had been revealed to the Hebrews as the Creator of the world, and sitting at the right hand of God, in certain passages, of which the worst of the Jews did not dispute the application; and with all this, that he should yet be *partaker of flesh and blood**, and in all things *made like unto his brethren*; as Moses had before declared in the law; *the Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst*

* Chap. ii. 14.

midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me *.

So particular is this prophecy, that it is twice given in the book of *Deuteronomy*, and twice reasoned from in the *Acts of the Apostles*, first by *St. Peter*, and afterwards by *St. Stephen*, in their discourses to the Jews †.

2. The necessity of mediation with God on the behalf of man, was signified by the priesthood of the law; to teach the people, that prayer could not be heard, nor sin pardoned, without a *priest to intercede*, and *blood to expiate*. But then, that this was only a figurative priesthood, a figurative intercession, a figurative atonement, serving for a time, to describe what should come after, and supersede the descriptive services of the law; the apostle here proves from the Old Testament itself, where a prophet pronounces them insufficient: *in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure—Then said he, lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second* ‡: that is, he taketh away the services of the law, that he may bring in Christ to do the will of God. *In the volume of the book it had been written of him; for the book of the law spoke this language in every*

* Deut. chap. xviii. 15. 18.

† Acts iii. 22. and vii. 37. ‡ Chap. x. 6. 9.

every part of it, that Christ should come to do the will of God for our sanctification.

3. The law shewed moreover, how this should be effected: for it was *dedicated with blood*, and its precepts and promises were called *a Testament*, that is, *a Will*, such as is made and witnessed amongst men for the conveying and settling an inheritance in a lawful way. Hence it followed, that no service could be accepted without the offering of blood; and that the *death* of the *testator* should intervene, before the promises of God could descend to his children. So argues the apostle*: *for this cause he is the mediator of the New Testament; that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Testament (and could not be purged away by the blood of animals) they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead—whereupon, neither the first Testament was dedicated without blood.*

4. It was also foretold, that there should be *a new covenant* †; not such as was made with the fathers when they were brought out of Egypt,

* Chap. ix. 15.

† Chap. viii, 8 &c.

Egypt, which covenant was confined to a particular people ; but such as should comprehend all nations, when the spirit of the divine law should be written in the hearts of men, and all should know the Lord from the least to the greatest. But the old and the new were both contained in the covenant God made with Abraham in the times before the law. In regard to his natural posterity it was said, *unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates*: this is a temporal promise: but to the same Abraham it was said, *in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*: this is a spiritual promise, and is the same in all respects with the christian covenant.

5. With regard to temporal things, the servants of God in all ages were instructed to look upon the world, and they actually did look upon it, as we do (or should do) now. Upon a principle of faith in God's promise, they who were called out of Egypt under Moses, set out upon a progress toward a land which they had never seen, and knew only by report ; with many difficulties and terrors to encounter by the way ; so that the history of their journey is an instructive picture of all the trials and dangers of the christian life : and when they were settled

tled in the land of promise, their business was not to give themselves up to the enjoyment of the world, but to *serve God* in holiness and righteousness, and still to depend upon him for their support and defence against their enemies. The greatest favourites of heaven, who had the best title to inherit the earth, considered this life only as a *pilgrimage* toward a better. Abraham *sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country*, where he was not at home, and *dwelt in tabernacles*, to signify that he had no fixed habitation upon earth, but *looked for a city which had foundations, whose builder and maker is God*. Jacob underwent a series of disappointments and sorrows; and toward the close of his life confessed that his *days had been few and evil*. * Moses preferred the *reproach of Christ* to the *treasures of Egypt*: and the saints and prophets, who came after him, were ready on all occasions to renounce the world in the spirit of martyrdom; they suffered all the contempt and persecution the world could inflict upon them for the trial of their faith, and *ran with patience the race that was set before them*, chusing death itself through the hope of a *better resurrection*: whence the saints of the law are celebrated

* See Chap. xi.

celebrated and set forth as examples of faith and patience to the saints of the gospel. How unaccountable therefore has been the error of some modern divines, such as these days of refinement have produced, who have contended that the law gave no notice of a future life, and that the Jews were taught to look for nothing under it but temporal rewards: a doctrine so false in itself, so injurious to the word of God, and so contrary to the preaching of Christ and his apostles, that it is condemned in the articles of the church of England; the seventh of which affirms, as it ought to do, and as we have sufficiently proved already, that "The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testament, everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only mediator between God and man, being both God and man. Wherefore they are not to be heard, which feign, that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises." To shew that they had a better hope, and that their faith was the same as ours, though their worship was of a different form, is the whole design of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the Christian doctrines are all deduced from the Old Testament. Our Saviour, in his argument against the Sadduces,

Mth.

Math. xxii. 31, shews how the doctrine of a resurrection was taught in that declaration of God to Moses, “ *I am the God of Abraham, &c.*” and the argument extends to the whole Old Testament: for if God, as the God of Abraham, was the *God of the living*, and Abraham still lives expecting the resurrection of the just; then the like declaration, wherever it occurs, must yield the same doctrine; for that God should be *the God of the dead*, is no more consistent with his honour in one part of the scripture than in another. The covenant of God is a covenant of *life*; and the argument is of equal force whether the relation is applied to those who are in the world or to those who are out of it. This life, considered in itself, is no better than death; (*vestra hæc, quæ dicitur vita, mors est;*) so that if God, when he called himself the *God of the Hebrews*, was the God of those who had hope only in this life (as a modern divine asserted for a project) than he was the God of the dead; and so the name *God of the Hebrews* would have been a dishonourable title, of which, as the apostle observes, Heb. xi. 16, God would have been *ashamed*, as a title no better than that of a mortal king, whose power and promises extend to this life only.

6. All this is further evident, in that the law promised a *Rest* or *Sabbath* which it never gave; and therefore, the promise looked forward to that other glorious Sabbath which is to be fulfilled in another life. The apostle, in explaining the scripture on this subject, shews us how the fulfilling of this promise was suspended. That the faithful had a Sabbath of Rest in prospect after the course of their labours, appears from that threatening sentence in the law, which denied it to those who did not believe. *For, saith the apostle, we which have believed do enter into Rest, as he said, as I have sworn in my wrath if they shall enter into my Rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world**. Now the question is, what the *Rest* here spoken of can mean? It cannot mean that Rest which immediately followed the six days of the creation, when God did rest on the seventh day from all his works; for that Rest of God had been past and gone from the foundation of the world, when the works of God were finished. We must therefore look for another: and in this inquiry, it may occur, that the Rest to be expected was in the land of Canaan; because those who were precluded from it fell in the wilderness;

* Chap. iv. 3.

wilderness; according to what is said—* *with whom was he grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his Rest, but to them that believed not?* Hence I say, it might be imagined, that the settlement of the people in Canaan was the Rest with which God was to reward them. But neither can this be the case; because in the prophet David, many ages afterwards, he limiteth the promise of this rest to a certain day; saying, *to day, after so long a time; to day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts* †. For if Jesus, as the apostle argues, (that is if Joshua, who is also called Jesus) *had given them Rest, (in Canaan) then would he not afterwards have spoken of another day.* There remaineth therefore a Rest to the people of God: that is, in other words, according to the drift of the argument, the Rest proposed to the people of God always meant what it means now; and that which remains to us at this day, *after so long a time,* is the same that was promised to the faithful of old. Consider the application of the term, and you will see that the apostles reasoning must

z 2

be

* Chap. iii. 17, 18. See Numb xiv. 30. and Deut. xii. 9.

† Chap. iii. 7, 8.

be true : for it is called the *Rest of God*—if they shall enter into *MY REST*—and what was that ? It was undoubtedly a Rest in Heaven, after the works of the creation were finished upon earth : *he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works as God did from his* : therefore it is a Rest, into which no man can enter, till his *works* upon the earth are *finished*. To those who understand the language of the law, and the apostles reasoning upon it, this is a demonstration, that the law did not rest in temporal promises. They who lived in faith under the patriarchal dispensation, died in the same faith ; death could make no change in their creed, because they expected of God what they could never receive, till their works upon earth were finished. Therefore, it is truly said of them ; *these all died in faith, not having received the promises ; but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth* *. The land of Canaan was not the object of their hope : it was only a sign and a pledge of the goodness of God, an earnest of what they were to expect after this life ; therefore they desired *a better country, that is an heavenly*

* Chap. xi. 13, &c.

heavenly, and their mortal life was a *pilgrimage* in quest of it. There never was an age, in which it was not required of the children of God, that they should renounce the world, and prepare themselves by that discipline which should fit them for a better state. Such is the language of the scripture to them all, under the several names of Patriarchs, Jews, or Christians—*My son despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him : for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth **.

7. What I proposed to consider in this lecture hath been sufficiently proved ; namely, that the religion of the people of God was the same for substance under the Old as under the New Testament ; so that, in fact, we find but one true religion from the beginning of the world to the end of it ; a religion of *faith* and *dependence upon God*, for his *protection* here, and his *rewards* hereafter.

The apostle having taught us throughout the Epistle that the spiritual things of the gospel, called the *good things to come*, were described as a body is by its shadow, under the priesthood and services of the law ; and that out-

ward forms of worship were ordained to keep up an inward principle of faith in the promises of God ; sums up his whole doctrine, by shewing us how faith operated, and what effects it produced in good men from the beginning of the world ; in order to demonstrate, by their examples, that true religion always was what it now is ; that *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever** ; that the faith and patience of the gospel were nothing new ; that the whole revelation of the Old and New Testament is one consistent scheme for the salvation of man ; and consequently, that Christianity is indeed, as some in mockery have advanced, *as old as the creation*. This is the design of the 11th chapter, which begins with a definition of faith, as *the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*. It is the substance of things hoped for, because nothing can be the object of our hope, till it has first been the object of our faith. It is the evidence of things not seen, because they are capable of no other : the ear is the witness of sounds, and the eye is the witness of visible objects ; but faith alone is the faculty which discerns invisible things, and receives them on the word of God : and if men do not with this faculty admit
and

* Chap. xiii. 8.

and embrace them, we shall not succeed by reasoning with them. Spiritual things must be received by a spiritual sense, which sense is called *faith*, and the scripture tells us, that *all men have not faith*; and where it is not, all the reasoning upon earth will not produce it; therefore let no man be so vain as to think, that his arguments will persuade those whom God hath not persuaded.

After his description of faith, the apostle proceeds to shew how it operated in the saints: first, in *Abel*, who offered a *bloody sacrifice* for the remission of sins; while Cain brought only of the *fruits of the earth*, not signifying his faith in the remission of sin by the shedding of innocent blood. Enoch is said to have *walked with God*; which no man can do but by faith, because God is invisible: therefore *he walked by faith and not by sight*. Noah believed that the flood would come upon the earth, when as yet there was no signs of it; and that his house might be saved, when the world should be drowned, by the preparing of an ark. Abraham gave himself up to God's direction, and went out in search of a land he had never seen, and did not so much as know the name of it. He laid Isaac upon the altar to be slain, though he had no other son

to inherit the promises; whence his faith concluded, they would be secured by his son's resurrection. Joseph, when he was dying, commanded that his bones should be carried into Canaan; in faith that the whole nation would follow them; and that the promises would be fulfilled to him after his death. Moses gave up his project of preferment at court; knowing that the ministry of God and the *reproach of Christ* would be attended with a better *recompence*. The fear of God, whom he did not see, had more weight with him than the wrath of Pharaoh who was present to him.

By these and many other like examples, it is proved, that nothing great or acceptable to God was ever done, but only from a sight of things invisible, and the expectation of what is to come after death. It was this faith which subdued and cast out the kingdoms of Canaan, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire; escaped the edge of the sword, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

There are no motives to the observation of a Christian life more striking than those which are drawn from the facts of the law. These the Apostle hath set before us abundantly in
the

the Epistle to the Hebrews, as I may shew you hereafter. In the mean while the moral of the whole doctrine hitherto delivered, is *to look*, as they did who went before us, *unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith*; that seeing him to be the beginning of our strength, and the end of our hope, we may follow him through the dangers of life and the terrors of death to *that rest which remaineth for the people of God*.

LECTURE III.

ON THE CHURCH, AS A SPIRITUAL SOCIETY,
WHICH IS THE SAME THING AT ALL
TIMES.

OUR enquiry into the faith of the ancient fathers shewed us, that there never was more than one true religion in the world: we shall now discover, that there never has been more than one true *religious society*, called the *Church*: and this I shall endeavour to prove,

First, by considering the *nature* of the Church, as a society.

Secondly, by considering the *form* of it.

The Church, in its *nature*, always was what it now is, a society comprehending the *souls* as well as the *bodies* of men; and therefore, consisting of two parts, the one spiritual, answering

ing to the soul, the other outward, answering to the body. Hence some have written much upon a *visible* Church and an *invisible*, as if they were two things; but they are more properly one, as the soul and body make a single person.

In the 12th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Apostle gives such a description of that society, into which Christians are admitted, as will shew us the nature of it. "Ye are come, says he, unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first born which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel"*. The terms here used give us a true prospect of the Church: let us take them in their order. By *Mount Sion*, we are not to understand the *place*, but the *thing signified*, the *heavenly society* of God and his saints; the same which David in spirit calls the *Hill of the Lord*†, whereto the King of Glory was to ascend; and the *Holy Hill of Sion*,

* Chap. xii. 22. &c.

† Psalm xxiv.

Sion, spoken of in the 2d Psalm, on which the Son was to be placed, after the vain opposition he should meet with from the Kings and Rulers of the earth. This is that *Zion of the Holy one of Israel*, to which the forces of the Gentiles were to flow from all parts of the world, as the prophet Isaiah describes it*; which prophecy was not fulfilled in the literal Sion where the Jews lived.

This society is also called the *City of the living God*, distinguished from the cities of the world, as Jerusalem was from the cities of the heathens: who dedicated their cities not to the living God, but to the names of their dead idols; such as were *Beth Shemesh*, *Beth Peor*, and others of that sort. This being then the city of the living God, must be an immortal society; for the *living God* does not preside over *dead citizens*; he is *not the God of the dead but the God of the living*, and all the members of this society *live unto him*. This is the city, said to *have foundations, whose builder and maker is God*: to this the holy Patriarchs looked as the object of their hope, knowing, that they were even then *of it*, and should never be out of it, because the *citizens of God never die*. It is therefore called the
heavenly

* Chap. lx

heavenly Jerusalem, because it is of an heavenly nature: and it is called *the Jerusalem which is above, which is free and is the mother of us all**: it is free in its nature, and cannot be brought into bondage by the persecuting powers of this world; and its members are free, because they are spiritual; and spirits cannot be bound. It is the *mother of us all*; even of all the families of the earth that are admitted into it; it gives the new birth to people of all countries; it knows no distinction of Jews or Christians, and its *citizens* may live at *Athens, Rome, or Antioch.*

Its spiritual nature is farther declared, in that it is said to comprehend an *innumerable company of angels*: the whole family of heaven is included in it. The Apostle calls it the *general assembly*, because it takes its members from all times and all places: other assemblies are partial, composed of the citizens of one city, or the people of one nation. It is the *Church of the first born written in heaven*, because its members, being intitled to the privilege of *inheritance*, are therefore called *first born*, to whom the right of inheritance belongs. This is also spoken with reference to that custom of the law, according to which all

the

* Gal. iv. 26.

the first born were to be *sanctified unto the Lord*; and Moses was commanded to register them all, and take the *number of their names**; with reference to which, the sons of the spiritual society are said to have *their names written in heaven*, where they are registered in the *book of life*. The word *Church* explains nothing to us in English, but in the Greek it signifies the company of those who are *called out of the world to be the servants and citizens of God*. Other societies have their proper judges and rulers; but here, God is the *judge of all*; his law is the rule of judgment, and he rewards and punishes without fear or favour. In the communion of the Church the *spirits of just men made perfect* are also included. It is a society, which admits only the spirits of the living, and as such cannot exclude the spirits of the dead: and this confirms what we said above, that the Church is a spiritual community, comprehending the dead as well as the living: for the best interpretation supposes these to be the spirits of the Martyrs, who had finished their earthly course, and were *made perfect through sufferings* after the example of their Saviour.

The Christian Church is here described by
the

* Numb. iii. 40.

the *old names*, to shew that it was *no new thing*, but the same holy mount of God, the same heavenly city of God, to which the spiritual part of his people always belonged : and they knew they did so, because the living God must be the head of a living society. They who were ignorant of its true nature, disputed about the *place* where the Church ought to be : the Samaritans contended that it was to be on their *mountain* ; the Jews said it was to be only at *Jerusalem* : but, as a society of spirits, it is no where and every where ; the *true worshippers* of God are they who worship him *in spirit and in truth** ; wherever these are, there is that *Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all*.

The Church being a society of a spiritual kind, is therefore called by the same names in all ages : Christians are said to be come unto *Mount Sion*, and Moses is said to have been with the *Church* in the wilderness. The reasonableness of which will be farther evident, if we consider the nature of its vocation : it is separated from the pollutions of the world, and called unto holiness of life. *Ye shall be holy unto me*, said the Lord ; *for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people that ye should*

* John iv. 23.

*should be mine**. For this end the Hebrews were placed in a land by themselves, that they might not be corrupted with the ways of the Gentiles. They had laws and customs of their own, all tending to secure them from the idolatrous worship and wicked manners of the heathens. We Christians, who now belong to the Church, are in like manner called out of the world. Our blessed Saviour, speaking of the vocation of his disciples, saith †, *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

But it is now to be shewn, secondly, that as the Church of God hath always been the same in its *nature*, it hath likewise preserved the same *form* in its external œconomy; the wisdom of God having so ordained, that the Christian Church under the gospel should not depart from the model of the Church under the law. For as the congregation of Israel was divided into *twelve tribes*, under the twelve Patriarchs, so is the Church of Christ founded on the *twelve Apostles*, who raised to themselves a spiritual seed amongst all the nations of the world. They all had an equal right, to use the style of St. Paul; who speaks of his converts, as of his *children, begotten by him*

* Lev. xx. 26.

† John xvii. 16.

him to a new life, through the preaching of the gospel: so that he and all the other Apostles are to be considered as the patriarchal progenitors of the whole Christian people.

In the new Church we have twelve Apostles, in the old twelve Patriarchs; but in the heavenly society, where both are united, we find *four and twenty Elders*, seated about the throne of God; as it was shewn in the spirit to St. John. There the saints of all ages looked to the Lamb that was slain for the salvation of all. By some he was expected; by others he is commemorated: to those he was the end of the law; to these the beginning of the gospel; but to the general assembly of them all, he is the object of their faith and hope, and the principle of all true religion from the beginning of the world to the end of it; the Redeemer of all times, the Saviour of all nations. We have reason to believe, that the Church, even in its glorious and triumphant state, shall still be conformed to its primitive division; for Christ assured his Apostles, that when the Son of man should sit upon the throne of his glory, they also should *sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel**.

Our Saviour, in choosing the number of

those whom he appointed to minister in his Church, was pleased to observe a strict conformity to the number of rulers under the law. Besides his *twelve* apostles, he appointed other *seventy* also: the number *seventy* agrees to that of the *Elders*, who were appointed to assist Moses in his ministry*.

A farther examination will teach us, that the priesthood of the gospel was formed very exactly upon that of the law. Aaron was appointed as an high priest for the service of the tabernacle; under whom the sons of Aaron constituted an inferior order of priests, divided afterwards under David and Solomon into four and twenty courses, all regularly officiating in their turns. Below these there was the order of the Levites, who assisted the priests in all the services of the temple. There were then three orders of priests in the Jewish Church; there was the high priest, and the sons of Aaron, and the Levites. In the Church of Christ there was the order of the *Apostles*; besides whom there were the *seventy disciples* sent out after them; and last of all the *Deacons* were ordained, to serve under both in the lower offices of the Church. The same form is still preserved in every regular Church of the world,

* See Numb. xi. 16, 25.

world, which derives its succession and authority from the Church of the Apostles; after whom the *Bishops* succeeded by their appointment; such as *Timothy* and *Titus* were in their respective Churches. This authority has been opposed in the Christian as it was in the Jewish Church: *Corah* and his company rose up against *Moses* and *Aaron*, for usurping a lordly authority over the people: so, in the later ages of the Christian Church, a levelling principle hath prevailed, which has appeared in many different shapes. In some it objects to the order of *Bishops* as an *usurpation* of long standing in the Church: in others, it argues for an equality of authority in all Christians, because *all the congregation are holy*; herein making no distinction between holiness of *person* and holiness of *office*. Thus hath the authority of the Church been troubled with arguments and objections, the same as in the times of old, and proceeding from the same spirit of rebellious opposition, under the disguise of superior sanctity. It was foretold to the church by the Apostle, that of *their own selves men should arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them* *, as *Corah* and his company rose out of the congregation itself,

A A 2

* Acts xx. 30.

itself, and drew the people after them. Unless it were so, the Church of Christ would not be conformed, as it ought to be, to the Church of Israel. Though the case is lamentable, yet thus it must be : *it must be that offences come ; the authority of the priesthood must be opposed and the Church must be divided, if the scriptures are verified ; but woe unto them by whom the offence cometh.*

The Church under the gospel hath also been provided for as it was under the law, by the *tenths* of all the fruits of the earth, set apart for the maintenance of its ministers. The antiquity of this provision is so great, that we cannot trace it up to its beginning. Abraham gave the *tenths of the spoils* to *Melchizedec*, long before the age of Moses ; and therefore the law only established what had been instituted in the earliest times of the Patriarchs. The Christian Church followed the same rule in all countries, as soon as it obtained a regular establishment ; and the apostle argues for the propriety of it from the law of Moses. *Do ye not know, said he, that they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple ? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar ? Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the*
gospel

should live of the gospel *. Here it is evidently intended, that the practice of the law should be taken as a precedent for the times of the gospel; and that as it was then, *even so* it ought to be now: but the clergy then received the tithes, &c. which were consecrated by God's appointment; therefore it is his ordinance that they should receive the same now; otherwise the cases would not be parallel.

During the persecutions under which the Christian Church suffered at its first appearance, its support by pecuniary contribution, and the sale of private property may seem to have authorized a new rule, different from that of the law of Moses. But we can draw no conclusion, because of the necessity of that time. In regular times the old rule will take place: and if the Church should again fall into distress, it must again depend upon the devotions of the congregation.

There is likewise a conformity in all the services and ministrations of the Church. The law had its washings and purifications, as we have the purification of water baptism. They had the passover in figure as we have it in truth; *for Christ our passover is sacrificed for us*; and we *keep that feast as a memorial of our*

A A 3

redemption,

* 1 Cor. ix. 13,

redemption, as they commemorated their deliverance from Egypt by the offering of the Pascal Lamb. He was no Jew who did not celebrate the Passover; and he is no Christian who neglects the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. As they had *manna in the wilderness* to support them, we have the *true bread from heaven*; without which we cannot pass through the wilderness of this world to the heavenly Canaan. They added their prayers to the *incense* of the temple, as we offer up our prayers through the merits of Christ, whereby they are recommended and made acceptable. There was a censer for incense within the veil, as Christ intercedes for us in the presence of God. *Let my prayer*, says the Psalmist, *be set forth in thy sight as the incense*; thereby shewing us what was intended in that part of their service: and when Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, offered incense in the temple, there came a voice from heaven which assured him that his *prayers were heard*. As these things have been considered more at large in the 4th and 5th Lectures on the *figurative language of the scripture*, it may suffice to observe, that as Jesus Christ is called the *minister of the true tabernacle*, all the services of the old tabernacle are verified under his priesthood; so that

that not one jot or tittle of the law is found to fail.

The Church has also been remarkably conformable to itself in its sufferings. There never was a time, so far as we can learn, when the true Church of God, with its doctrines and institutions, was not hated and opposed by the world; either persecuted and oppressed by powerful tyrants, or traduced and insulted by lying historians. From Abel downwards, a restless worldly spirit of unbelief has contradicted the worship of the true God, and troubled his people. The Hebrews were held in abomination by the Egyptians, and treated as slaves; though the nation had been saved from famine, and its policy reformed and established under an Hebrew. They plotted to extirpate the whole race of them, by casting every man-child into the river. When the Church was settled in Canaan, all the neighbouring nations of idolaters were as thorns in their sides, detesting their religion, and fighting against them at every opportunity. The Chaldeans led them into captivity, and detained them for seventy years, with a view to make them forget their religion; the practice of which they also endeavoured to render impossible by the demolition of their temple. Antiochus murdered the Maccabees,

cabees, and harassed the whole people on account of their faith.

The same spirit, acting on the same principles, afflicted the Christian Church with ten bloody persecutions; and there never was a time when it was not misrepresented by lying reports and malicious accusations. Truth and godliness have always been distinguished by the world's ill-will towards them; and if there be any particular Church now, which is hated and railed at more than the rest, by Papists on one side and the Sectaries on the other, I will venture to pronounce from this circumstance only, that wherever that Church can be found, it will prove to be, in its *doctrine* and *profession*, the purest Church of Christ upon earth.

The authority and discipline of the Church (which are the last things I shall speak of) have been the same in all ages by God's appointment; as being founded on two reasons which are of perpetual obligation. The Church having the charge of the divine oracles, and being the guardian of the divine law, must have authority to preserve it, by punishing those who offend against it; and being a society or body corporate, must always have had (what is common to all lawful societies) a
right

right of preserving itself by a power over its own members.

The authority of office in the Church always was, and now is, from God himself: no man can take the honour of the priesthood, but *he that is called of God, as was Aaron*: and the person so invested is accountable to God for the exercise of his authority, and not to the world; because the object in view is the preservation of God's law for the salvation of his people. Therefore, *every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward**, and, *he that despised Moses's law died without mercy under two or three witnesses†*. The same power (*mutatis mutandis*) was with the Christian Church; and they are commanded by the apostle to watch over their members, and *look diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up, trouble them, and thereby many be defiled‡*. No society can long survive, when its discipline is lost; because the manners of men, when unrestrained, tend universally to dissolution. The Church has undoubtedly, as it always had, a divine right to preserve the faith, to punish its own members by censures, deprivations, and excommunications; and exercise

* Heb. ii. 2. † Chap. x. 28. ‡ Chap. xii. 15.

exercise such discipline as is necessary to prevent the gates of hell from prevailing against it.

When we consider the degeneracy of the times, and the corruption of all orders of people; the insolence of the offenders, and the weakness of authority; it should not make us fretful and disobedient; it should only dispose us to pray for that blessed day, when the Church of Christ shall be restored to its purity against the corruptions, and to its authority against the encroachments of the world; when he, who drove the buyers and sellers out of his temple, shall again purge his Church of those that disgrace and defile it; when they who have despised and oppressed it, as if it had been made for them to trample upon, shall themselves lick the dust with their teeth broken.

I have taken much pains to explain the matter of this epistle to the Hebrews, because it connects the Old and New Testament, and gives light to both. It rectifies many mistakes of superficial Christians, who suppose that Christianity was a new thing when it was preached by the apostles, because Christ was then newly come in the flesh; whereas it was only the perfection of that doctrine, and that Church,

Church, which had subsisted from the beginning of the world. Hence also we learn the infinite importance of the sacraments and institutions of the Church, of which many Christians in these days have a poor low understanding. The confusion which followed upon the reformation brought many to a deplorable state of ignorance ; out of which they cannot be recovered, but by following that admonition of the prophet—*Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls**.

* Jer. vi. 16.

LECTURE IV.

THE MORAL OF THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES,
AS STATED IN THE EPISTLE TO THE
HEBREWS.

THIS Epistle doth not only shew us the harmony of the Old and New Testament, and explain the great doctrine of faith with all the depth of divine learning ; but gives us the best precepts, and the weightiest reasons, for a godly and christian life ; which all who study this part of the scripture should lay up in their hearts ; that they may be *doers of the word and not hearers only*. These precepts and reasons I shall therefore collect and enforce to your consideration, as they occur to us in the course of the Epistle.

The Apostle having described the dignity of the Son of God, thus argues ; that if he was

so great, how important must that way of salvation be, which he preached to the world? How necessary must it be for us to attend to it? and how dreadful will the consequences be if we do not? If the law of Moses, published by inferior ministers, was so strictly enforced, and every offence against the honour of it so severely punished; *how shall we escape if we neglect the great salvation published by Jesus Christ?* This is the purport of his reasoning; and now let us consider the weight of it. If God descends from heaven to teach, there must be some great reason for his coming, which will render those exceedingly guilty who do not hear him. Therefore it must be our duty to listen to his words, and study his doctrine, that we may understand it and receive the benefit of it for the salvation of our souls. We may put this off as a matter of no consequence, and escape for the present. The man who tells us of these things out of a pulpit, has no power to punish us; but nevertheless God will not be neglected: he who vindicated his law, shall vindicate his gospel; and then what will become of us? what shall we say for ourselves in that dreadful day, when the reasonings and reserves of every heart shall be exposed and confuted? If the question is demanded

manded of us, how it came to pass that we were so ignorant of the gospel, and so inattentive to its instruction? shall we answer, that we were too busy? What greater business can any man find in this vain world, than to provide for the saving of his soul? If his business could bring the whole world into his possession, what good would that do him? The man that had the whole world for his own, would probably be the greatest fool in it; and care or pleasure would soon destroy him. Yet they who can get but a very small part of the world, and must soon lose even that, make their business an excuse, and have no time to bestow upon their everlasting interest.

The importance of the salvation spoken of in the text is farther shewn, by the manner in which it was recommended to the world. It was attested by signs and wonders and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost; all intended to raise the attention of mankind, and convince them that they must be lost if they neglected to hear what was so powerfully recommended. Add to all this the amiable, as well as the excellent character of its great Preacher; whose life was spent in teaching; whose only business in the world was to save those, many of whom are too busy to hear him.

He

He condescended to the ignorance of the poor; was compassionate to sinners; argued patiently with the perverse and obstinate; and accommodated himself to the wants of all. At last he tasted death for every man; for you that hear, and for me that speak; and by his exaltation after his sufferings hath shewed us the encouragement we have, and the reward we shall receive, if we follow his example. Nothing but hardness of heart can hinder us from partaking of the benefits of our heavenly calling; as it hindered the people in the wilderness from reaching the promised land. We are therefore to *take heed*, as the Apostle forewarns us, *lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God*. This Egypt, this wicked world, in which we live, must not withdraw our affections, and put us out of humour with the manner and the way of trial, by which God shall be pleased to carry us forward in our progress through this wilderness. And we are to exhort one another against the *deceitfulness of sin*.^{*} We can see how grossly the disobedient Israelites were *deceived*, in preferring *Egypt* to *Canaan*; and we wonder at them, that they should be so perverse and brutish: let us then not be cheated

* Heb. iii. 13.

cheated as they were. How did it happen that they were beguiled of their inheritance? They did *not believe* the promises of God; and if we are deceived it must be for the same reason. The rest of Canaan was better than the bondage of Egypt; and the service of God is better to us now than the bondage of sin; which can only interrupt the happiness of the servants of God, and fill them with disappointment and bitterness. Miserable is the situation of a Christian, who does not look forward, and press forward, to the promised Rest. He has left Egypt; and there is no better entertainment in this wilderness, than the hope of getting well out of it. But if instead of this, he is only looking back and wishing for the world which he has renounced; he is that *double minded man*, who is *unstable in all his ways*; neither a man of the world, nor a Christian; neither easy with God, nor without him. There cannot be a more unprofitable and unhappy character. It is said of the Israelites in the wilderness, that their *heart was not whole* with God, neither continued they stedfast in his covenant. How many fall under the same censure! they give a portion of their heart to God, and another much greater to the world.

When

When the Apostle is entering upon the more mysterious parts of this Epistle, he upbraids the Hebrews with their unskilfulness in the word of God. They contented themselves with the first elements of Christian instruction, and neglected the mysteries of the scriptures; living, as children do, upon *milk*, with little appetite and strength to admit more solid nourishment*. Some think they are learned enough, if they never get beyond their catechism: some never get so far. And it is common to plead in excuse, that little as their knowledge is, they know more good than they do, and have already more learning than they practise: not considering that the scripture abounds with many great and excellent mysteries, which have nothing practical in them, but so far only as they elevate the mind, and by bringing our affections nearer to God, dispose us to do his will with more love and cheerfulness; and consequently to do more of it, and to better effect: which is a matter of infinite importance, and now too little attended to. The Christian must be progressive; he must *go on* from the beginning of knowledge to the *perfection*† of it. He ought to know more of God every day; otherwise he may

VOL. IV. B B think

* See Chap. v. 12, 13.

† Chap. vi. 1.

think of him less, till he totally forgets him : and then he is in danger of falling into that state, out of which men cannot be relieved into repentance. When the gospel, which a man had received, has not power to lead him forward, there is no new gospel to awaken him : when the most powerful medicine God ever made hath lost its effect, what other can we apply ?

So long as the soul is in a growing state, the blessing of heaven continues with it, and the grace of God brings it on to farther improvement : but if it is out of culture, thorns and briars get possession of it, and its end is to be burned. When thorns and briars shall be planted in Paradise, then such careless Christians may expect to be admitted into heaven.

From the consideration of Christ's Priesthood we are exhorted to *draw near with faith*, and partake of his blessing, by attending upon his Church and his ordinances ; not *forsaking the assembling ourselves together as the manner of some is**. The Jews, I fear, in the worst of times, were more zealous in attending their public services and sacrifices, than some of those who call themselves Christians. In the best days of the Church, it was always the manner

* Chap. x. 22, &c.

manner of some few to absent themselves from the religious assemblies of the Christians: but what would St. *Paul* have said, if he had lived to these times, when perhaps not one half of the people are at the public prayers; not one quarter of them at the sacrament? and they have no persecution to fear, as the primitive Christians had; who attended their worship at the hazard of their lives. It must be owing to mere idleness and indifference; for however business may be pleaded on the ordinary days of the week, it cannot be pleaded on a Sunday. This truth I must suppose them to know; that if their Saviour is a *Priest*, they must partake of the *sacrifice* he offers for their salvation. But there is another dreadful truth, which they do not think of; that, to those, who do not partake of this sacrifice for sin, there remaineth no other; but a certain *fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries*. If he who despised *Moses' law* died without mercy, of how much sorer punishment shall they be thought worthy, who do this despite to the spirit of grace*, by neglecting the great atonement that was made by Christ himself for the sins of the world? It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the

B B 2

living

* Chap. x. 26, &c.

*living God**, and be made an example of divine vengeance : and what else can they expect, who refuse to accept of the sacrifice of Christ, by which alone the *fiery indignation* of God can be turned away from their own persons ? No words are sufficient to express their danger : O that they could see it themselves, and would consider of it, and not trust to such frivolous excuses as will stand them in no stead in the day of visitation !

To encourage us in our Christian warfare, the Apostle sets before us at large the examples of the Saints of old, who were all saved by leading a life of faith † : enduring every trial and conquering every enemy, on this great principle. There never was any other way of salvation from the beginning of the world, but this way of faith. All the Saints of God who found acceptance with him, depended upon his word and promise for such things as they could not see ; and either forsook the pleasures of the world, or contradicted its errors, and endured its reproaches, for his sake. We may plead the business of life, and the cares of life ; but they had their business and their cares as well as we ; yet they loved God, and made it their first care to be saved.

The

* Chap. x. 31. † See Chap. xi. of this Epistle.

The race we are to run may have its difficulties: indeed, if it is a *race*, it cannot be without them: but we are *encompassed with a cloud of witnesses* *, all testifying that this *RACE* may be run, and the prize obtained; because they did actually perform it, and are entitled to the crown of victory. What hinders us from doing the same; but that we are retarded by some *weight*, which we are not careful to divest ourselves of and *lay aside*? We do not strive against that sin, whatever it may be, which most easily besets us, and is never to be subdued but by faith, and prayer, and self-denial; faith in better things than this world can bestow; and prayer for that grace which may assist us in doing what our strength will never accomplish.

Great is the influence which the example of God's faithful servants will have upon our minds, if we meditate upon it. They were men of like passions with ourselves, and were not without their weaknesses: Sin put on the same deceitful appearance to them as to us; and they had the scorn of an overbearing world to resist, as we have now. Their example, while it instructs, will animate and encourage us. But greater than all is the exam-

ple of our blessed Saviour himself: therefore we are directed to *look unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God**. What are the troubles we are accustomed to, compared with the agonies of the cross? What is the contempt of silly empty people, who call themselves the world, compared with the disgrace of hanging naked as a malefactor before a multitude, who mocked at the punishment as a proof that he who suffered it was an impostor? Nothing was ever so full of apparent disgrace, as the character of Jesus Christ at his passion. How distressing and almost distracting is it, to be innocent, and yet seem to be guilty? This is a piercing trial to an honest mind. To affect to be great when we are mean, and powerful when we are weak, exposes us to the scorn of every enemy; and this the enemies of Christ laid to his charge, and gratified themselves with every malicious expression that could add to the apparent infamy of his sufferings. Yet all this shame he patiently endured, *for the joy that was set before him*. This we are to consider under all our trials. God does not lay
upon

upon us any grief or chastening, for its own sake; but to correct our minds, and give us a title to that joy, which shall be the reward of patient suffering. Thus we shall not be weary and faint in our minds. I grant it is a severe trial to mortal man, to deserve good and receive evil: but to this we are all called, as the followers of a crucified Saviour. The Son of God was made *perfect through sufferings*; and if God is our father, we must expect that he will chasten us; if he does not, then are we *bastards and not sons**. Bastards are often forsaken by their parents, and left to grow up without correction: consequently to be brought by the tendency of their unreformed nature to misery and destruction: but no Christian would wish for such a privilege: he judges it far better to suffer in hope, than to be at his ease, as one whom God hath neglected.

From the description given of the Church as a spiritual society, the Christian is to learn the dignity of his own character, and to conduct himself in a manner suitable to his station. He seems outwardly like other men; but inwardly he has an honourable place in the kingdom of spirits: he is in the company

B B 4

of

of angels, saints, and martyrs ; he is under the dominion of God as his king and lawgiver ; he is a student of wisdom in the school that has sent out so many sons unto glory ; he is within the covenant that is sealed by the blood of Christ for his purification and redemption ; his name is registered in heaven, as an heir of immortality : he knows that while the mighty empires of the earth are changing and passing away into oblivion, the *kingdom* of which he is a member shall *never be moved* *. *The earth shall be shaken*, and the *heavens* shall melt away ; but his inheritance is secure. The same *God* who is a *consuming fire* to an impenitent world, will be to him a Protector and a Saviour, if he *serves him acceptably*, in this short time of his probation, *with reverence and godly fear*.

The last chapter of the Epistle consists wholly of exhortations, relating to the great duties of charity, purity, submission, and a detachment from the world.

All parties of men are bound together by a common interest ; which, though in some cases even wicked and absurd, and little better than a conspiracy, will have its effect in disposing

posing them to espouse the cause, and prefer the company and conversation of one another. Now as there is no common interest so important as that of Christians; it ought to produce such a friendship as is superior to every other relation or connexion. *Remember them that are in bonds*, says the Apostle, *as bound with them*; that is, as considering that they are members of the body of Christ, and that one member cannot suffer without affecting the rest. The same rule is applicable to every other condition of life; as if it had been said; remember them that are *poor*, as partaking of their poverty; remember them that are *sick*, as being sick with them: for thence we shall feel the same obligation to relieve *them* as to relieve *ourselves*; and much greater comfort, because *it is more blessed to give than to receive*.

Purity of life is another virtue essential to the Christian character. We are to consider ourselves as brought into that heavenly society, wherein are angels, saints, and martyrs: then, how shocking will it be to reflect, that an impure Christian is impure in the company of Angels; drunk, and like a beast, in the company of Angels; covetous, ambitious, self-interested, and deceitful, in the company
of

of Angels. Hence you will understand, how a wicked Christian is worse than a wicked Heathen, and will have a more severe account to give; because he adds affront and insult to his wickedness; so that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for him.

From the consideration that true religion has always had the same object from the beginning of the world, namely, that of bringing men to God by the way of faith and patience; and that *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever*; yesterday, under the Law; to day, under the Gospel; and *for ever*, in the kingdom of Glory: we should learn to be steadfast in this ancient plan, and look with a suspicious eye upon all pretended reformation and improvements of modern Christians, who are inventing new modes of faith, and would shew us what they call a more excellent way. Vanity is always fond of novelty: you see it every day in the common change of fashions: and therefore vain men are carried about with every wind of doctrine, propagated by those who are ignorant of the antiquity of that religion, by which all believers have been and are now to be saved. If men did but study the scripture on a right principle, without a spirit of party,

party, and enquired duly into primitive Christianity, they would be ashamed of the little mean differences and distinctions which divide their hearts, and break them into sects ; filling them with a Pharisaical pride against one another ; as if the *end of the commandment* were not *charity*, but hatred, contempt, and ill-will.

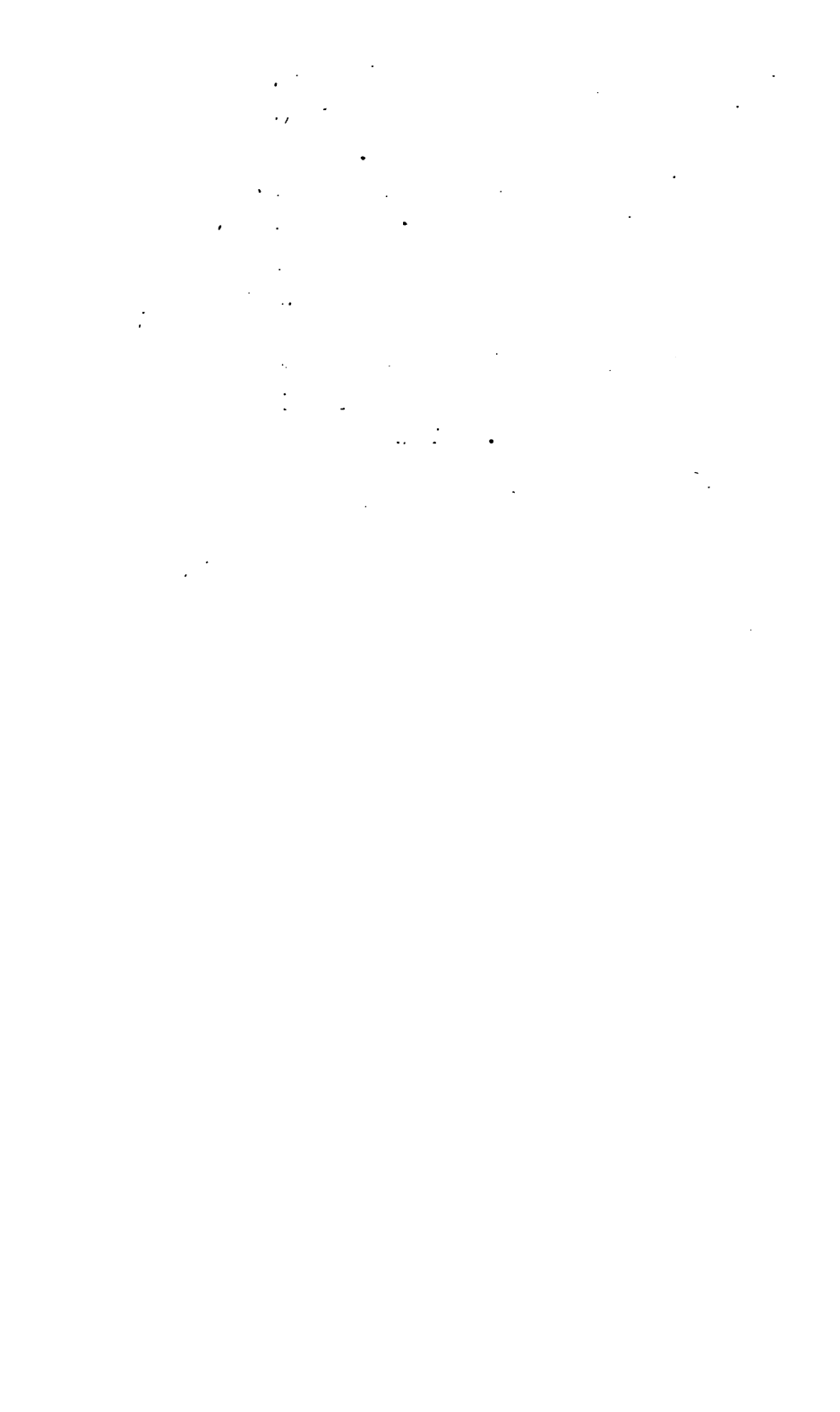
To prevent this, the Apostle instructs the Hebrews to *obey them that have the rule over them*, their lawful Pastors and Teachers, whom Christ hath appointed to keep them in the way of peace ; and whose studies and labours must qualify them to inform and direct the ignorant better than they can direct themselves. An abuse of the principles of the reformation, which can never be sufficiently lamented, has at length made every man his own teacher, and established a spirit of self-exaltation and opposition, than which no temper is more hateful to God, because none is so destructive of piety and peace. Christians should leave that to the sons of the earth, who are disputing for power, places and pre-eminence ; with whom gain is godliness, because they have no God but Mammon and Belial, no views nor hopes beyond the present life.

This leads me back to the great source of all moral instruction, on which the Apostle hath

hath so frequently insisted, and with which I shall conclude; I mean, the necessity of a detachment from the world in all those who would be followers of Jesus Christ. Our master was one who came to disown the world, and to be disowned by it; he came to his own and was not received by them; he was hated for his truth, reviled for his works of goodness and mercy, and at his death was led out of the city of Jerusalem to *suffer without the gate**, as one disowned, and cast out, and delivered over to the world of the Gentiles; all of which was foreshewn by the great yearly sacrifice, whose blood was first offered in the Tabernacle, and then it was carried out to be *burned without the camp*. On this the Apostle raises an affecting exhortation, that we ought to *go out after him, bearing his reproach*; even the reproach of being despised and disowned and *cast out* by the world as he was. Every Christian, though he is neither with the camp, nor with the city of Jerusalem, has some attachment which he is called upon to leave, and to be despised for so doing: he must go out either from the wisdom of the world, or the fashion of the world, or the party and the interests of worldly people; as Christ went out of the gate of Jerusalem, and

* Chap. xiii. 12.

and as Abraham forsook his family and friends, to obey the calling of God. The unbelieving Jews looked with contempt on those who left them to follow a crucified Master, whom they had led out of their city as a malefactor and delivered to the Gentiles ; and the world will cast reproach upon all those who forsake its opinions and customs. But, as the Jews themselves were soon afterwards driven out from their city, and their whole œconomy was dissolved ; so shall the world itself be destroyed, and its inhabitants shall be turned out from the place in which they trusted. When this shall happen, they have no other place in reserve ; but we shall find that city, that *continuing city*, which we have so long looked after, *whose builder and maker is God.*



AN
ESSAY
ON THE
CHURCH.

For my Brethren and Companions' Sake, I will wish thee Prosperity. Yea, because of the House of the Lord our God, I will seek to do thee good.

PSALM CXXII.



CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Distinction between the World and the Church; with the Nature and Character of both Societies.

CHAPTER II.

Of the Means of Grace, and the Marks by which the Church of Christ is to be known.

CHAPTER III.

The Errors which tempt men to leave the Church, and make them easy when they are separated from it.

CHAPTER IV.

On the Abuse of the Reformation, &c.

CHAPTER V.

A short View of the present State of the Argument between the Church of England and the Dissenters.

POSTSCRIPT.

An Account of the first Separation of the Dissenters from the Church of England.

P R E F A C E.

THE three great subjects, with which a Christian Minister is concerned, are the Word of God, the Church of God, and the Christian Life. Circumstances and occasions will sometimes direct his thoughts to one of these, and sometimes to another: but so long as any of the three are before him, he is within the circle of his duty.

I was led to the subject of the following Essay, by an accident. I am a Curate in a country parish; who make it my business, and have found it my pleasure, to teach the children

of my people, privately in my own house, and publicly in the Church ; and I am, for the present, the only *Sunday Schoolmaster* of the place. In the course of my instructions, I had occasion to observe, that the Catechism of the Church of England, though a most excellent summary of the Christian Doctrine, is deficient in one point, viz. *the Constitution of the Church of Christ* ; the knowledge of which, in a certain degree, is necessary to the preservation of that *charity* which is the *end of the commandment* ; and, for the want of which, so many are drawn away from the Church, who would certainly have remained with it, if they had known what it is. Yet is our Catechism not so deficient, but that it includes the grand distinction betwixt the *World* and the *Church* ; which distinction being explained, I found we were possessed of a leading idea, which gave so much light to my young pupils, that I determined to go through the subject.

As I have been persuaded, ever since I began to think on these things, of the great importance

portance of uniformity in worship amongst Christians: so have I been led to observe, on the other hand, the many evil consequences of non-conformity, with the dangerous delusions of the mind, arising from the harangues of preachers pretending to extraordinary gifts, while they are but half learned in the gospel, which they undertake to publish, and are greatly mistaken in the spirit of it. I see how some men are cheated with the appearance of being converted to godliness; when they are only converted from one sin to another; from loving the world, to hating their neighbours; from the coldness of church devotion, to an uncharitable heat against the Church itself; from the moral philosophy of some of our pulpits, to the Antinomian faith, which gives men a license to sin; from the drunkenness of the body, to the intoxication of the mind, with spiritual pride and false doctrine.

I am well assured, that if this subject of the Church, now so much neglected, and almost forgotten by those who are most concerned to understand

understand it, should come to be better considered; there would be more true piety, and more peace, more of those virtues which will be required in Heaven, and which must therefore be first learned upon earth.

Some amongst us err, because they *know not the scriptures*; and others, because they never considered the nature of the Church. Some think they can make their own religion, and so they despise the word of God, and fall into infidelity. Others think they can make their own Church, or even be a Church unto themselves; and so they fall into the delusions of enthusiasm, or the uncharitableness of schism. But, as there is nothing to enlighten the minds of men in the doctrines of salvation, but the word of God; so is there nothing that can unite their hearts and affections, but the Church of God. *We are one bread, and one body*, saith the Apostle; one body by partaking of one bread; and that can only be in the same communion.

In the weighing of these things, the prevail-
ing

ing spirit of the times, and the sanction which it may have given either to the profligate sinner, or to the presumptuous saint, are of no account upon the scale. In the settling of principles, we are never to consider how the world hath practised, but how God hath taught. The practice of the multitude, how great soever that multitude may be, hath no influence upon truth: yet it will stagger the minds of many, and carry them away, as with an overbearing torrent. Happy are they who have a better rule to direct them. They know that man *applauds, highly applauds, what God abominates*: and the higher the applause, the more room there is for suspicion. They know that the voice of the multitude was against Jesus Christ, when but few were for him; and they had hid themselves, and dared not to speak their minds. When Noah followed the direction of God in building the ark, for the saving of his house, the world was against him. To them no ark was necessary, because they had determined amongst themselves, that there would be

be no flood; and consequently, that Noah was a bigot, whose undertaking, while it exposed himself, was an invidious reflection upon the age. When the father of the faithful followed the calling of God, there were none to stand by him and encourage him; he was separated from his nearest relations; and wheresoever he went, he was under fears and dangers from people of a false persuasion. When Jesus Christ brought with him from heaven, that light which was to be the glory of his people, one ruler of the Jews came to him by stealth in the night, to consult him as a teacher, come from God. So great was the authority of a blinded multitude, that a ruler of the people was afraid of being brought into disgrace, by conversing personally with the Saviour of the world!

The times, therefore, and the people who live in them, are never to be considered by us, when we are seeking or following the truth, on the ground of its own proper evidence. When it was asked, with a design to perplex the people,

ple, who, of the *Rulers*, or of the *Pharisees*, had believed? our Saviour gave them a different rule: why do ye not of yourselves, said he, judge what is right; without going first to consult those, who are blinded by false learning, and, with an appearance of great sanctity, have imposed upon the people? "See," saith one, "how fast our doctrine is increasing! all the learned are going after it; and you must all submit to it in a very short time." And who are they that thus reason with us? The very same persons, who declaim so loudly on the fallibility of all men; and yet hold themselves to be little less than infallible in the choice of their own opinions. Let error rise as high as it can; and let truth sink as low as a wicked world can reduce it; the difference between them is the same as ever; and we shall still find it wiser and better to follow the setting sun, as *Columbus* did when he discovered the Indies. The meteor of heresy, which blazes, and dazzles us for a while with its appearance, will burn out, and leave not a spark behind; while

while the sun only sets to rise again. Such will be the fate of the Church, and of the doctrines of truth by which it is supported.

There never was a time from the beginning of the world, when there was not a party against the Church of God : and our Israel must have its enemies, as that Church had which came out of Egypt. In the first age of the Gospel, the Apostle St. Jude spoke experimentally of those whom he then saw, or prophetically of those whom we should see, that they go in the way of Cain, and run after the error of Balaam, and perish in the gainsaying of Corah. If our governors were as cruel as Pharaoh, some would rejoice at it, and upbraid us with every disadvantage we might be under from hard usage ; as a sign that the Church is a thing of no consequence, and that all those who belong to it are the vassals of the state. If the Church were as pure as Abel, the envy and jealousy of Cain would hate its offerings and sacrifices. If its order and œconomy were as perfect as in that Church which covered the face of the earth

in

in its passage to Canaan, the self-interested spirit of the mercenary *Balaam* would endeavour to bring a curse upon it, and blast its greatness. If its governors were as manifestly supported in their commission, as *Moses* and *Aaron*, the spiritual pride of *Corah* would set up the holiness of the congregation against its priesthood, and the power of the people against the civil magistrate, who gives it protection. But none of these things ought to stagger or surprize a reader of the scripture: they are all to be expected: *these things were our examples*: and the Church would not be the Church of God, if there were none to rise up against it.

With these considerations in his mind, and not without them, a reader will be prepared to examine what I have written upon the Church. If any of our dissenting brethren should look into this little piece, and find the matter so represented as to engage their attention; my prayer shall be with them, that God may give them the grace to cast out the bitter leaven of a party-spirit; to lay aside all temporal motives

tives and interests, and consider the Church (as I have done) only so far as it is related to the *other world*. To any particular or national Church, all temporal alliances are but momentary considerations, which pass away with the fashion of this world ; and the Church may be either with them, or without them, as it was in the first ages : but the Church itself, under the relation it bears to Jesus Christ, abideth for ever.

ESSAY
ON THE
CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

**OF THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE WORLD
AND THE CHURCH; WITH THE NATURE
AND CHARACTER OF BOTH SOCIETIES.**

TWO things of a contrary nature are best understood when they are placed near to one another, or compared together in the mind. The summer is better understood, and more to be valued, when we compare it with the winter; a season in which so many comforts are wanting, which the summer affords us. The blessings of government are more acceptable,

VOL. IV.

D D

when

when compared with the miseries of anarchy. We have the like advantage, when we compare together the *church* and the *world*, those two societies of which we are members: of the world by our natural birth; of the church by our spiritual birth in baptism. When we are admitted into the christian covenant, we renounce this world as a *wicked* world, and become members of the church, which is called the *holy* church. Both these societies are influential on those who belong to them; the one corrupts, the other sanctifies: therefore it is of the last importance to mankind to consider and understand the difference between them.

If we ask, why the world is called wicked, we shall find it to be such from the nature and manners of its inhabitants: for the world, as it means the system of the visible creation, can have no harm in it. There can be no wickedness, where there is no moral agency nor freedom of action.

From the sin of Adam, and the effects of his fall, the state of man by nature is a state of sin. The scripture is so express in this, that it is not necessary to insist upon it. A disposition to evil comes into the world with every man, and is as a seed, which brings forth its fruit throughout the course of his life. Many evil passions
disturb

disturb and agitate his mind ; and from the ignorance or darkness which prevails in him, he knows not that he is to resist them in order to his peace and happiness, nor hath he ability so to do, if he did know it. The worst and the most violent of all his passions is pride, which affects superiority, and delights in vain shew and pompous distinction ; whether it be that of wealth, or honour, or wisdom. Covetousness disposes him to take all he can to himself, and pay no regard to the wants of others ; whence the state of nature is a state of war, in which men plunder and destroy one another ; not knowing the way of peace, which consists only with restraint, and must be taught them from above ; *the way of peace have they not known*, saith the scripture.

Man knows all things by education, but nothing by nature, except, as the Apostle saith, *what he knoweth naturally as a brute beast*. The world, as we see it now, is under the restraint of laws, which in some countries are better in themselves and better executed than in others ; but if there were no laws and no governments to execute them, then we should see what a scene of destruction and misery this world would be, through the sinfulness of man's nature. Fraud, rapine, and cruelty,

those three dreadful monsters, make strange havoc amongst us, notwithstanding the laws and regulations of society: what then would this world be without them?

With respect to God, the state of man is a state of rebellion, alienation, and condemnation. His ways are so opposite to the will of God, that he is said to be *at enmity* with him. He has no alliance with his Maker, either as a child, a subject, or a servant; but being under a general law of disobedience, can inherit nothing from God but wrath and punishment.

You will see this account verified by the plainest declarations of the scripture.—First, as to the enmity of the world against God. *If the world hate you*, saith our Lord when he came to save it, *ye know that it hated me before it hated you*. Secondly, as to their alienation or departure from all alliance with him—*you that were some time alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works*; saith St. Paul, Col. i. 21: and again, speaking of the natural state of the *Ephesians* before their conversion, he describes them as *aliens and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world*. In which passage, there is something farther than appears from the sound of the words; for when we read, *with-*
out

out God in the world, the words, *in the world*, are emphatical, and denote this *wicked world*, such as we have been describing it, of which they that are members must of course be without God, and without hope: they belong to a society which knows him not.

Then, thirdly, that the world is under condemnation; *we are chastened of the Lord*, saith St. Paul, *that we should not be condemned with the world*: whence it is evident, that the world, as such, is under condemnation, and can expect nothing of God, but punishment for sin.

We are now prepared to take a review of this society called the world. It is composed of men lost by the fall; disposed to all manner of evil; ignorant of the way of peace; at enmity with God, and with one another; delighting themselves in the pride of appearance, and the vanity of distinction. In a word, *the whole world lieth in wickedness*, and they that are condemned for sin will be condemned *with the world*, whose condemnation, therefore, is a thing of course. What human philosophy may say of this description of the world, we are not to regard: if it is the description which stands in the Holy Scripture, we are not to consider what men may say of it. A proud world will

never be pleased to see an humiliating description of itself.

Such then is the world, and such are we all, so far as we are members of it. God therefore of his infinite mercy takes us out of this wicked society, and *translates* us into another. He *delivers us from the power of darkness, and translates us into the kingdom of his dear son*; and without this translation we are inevitably lost. You are here to observe, that the *kingdom* of Christ is one of the names of his *church*; and they that are in it, as it is distinguished from the world, are called *children of the kingdom*. Its nature is totally different from the kingdoms of this world (of which we shall see more hereafter) for as the world is called *wicked*, so the church is called *holy*, and all the holiness that can be in man, must be derived from thence. If we enquire how, and in what respects, the church is holy, we find it must be so from its relation to God. It is called the *church of God*, and he being holy, every thing that belongs to him must be so of course. And further, it is a society, or body, of which the Holy Spirit is the life; and this life being communicated to those who are taken into the church, they are thereby made partakers of an holy life, which is elsewhere called *the life of God*; from which
life

life they are *alienated* who are out of this society. It is holy in its sacraments; our baptism is an holy baptism, from the Holy Spirit of God; the Lord's Supper is an holy sacrifice: the ordinance of absolution is for the forgiveness of past sin, that the members of the church may be recovered from sin to a state of holiness, and peace with God. The church is holy in its priesthood; all the offices of which are for the sanctification of the people.

The contrary nature of the two societies I have been speaking of, will now be better understood, when they are compared together. In the one, men are in a lost condition; in the other, they are in a state of salvation: for as the world is *alienated from God*, the church is in alliance and covenant with him, and partaker of his promises. As the world is under condemnation, the church is under grace and pardon of sin: its baptism washes away original sin, and gives a new birth to purity and righteousness; its other sacrament of the Lord's supper maintains that spiritual life which is begun at baptism, as meat and drink support the life we receive at our natural birth. As the world is *without hope*, the Christian hath *hope in death*, through the Resurrection of Christ, and is assured, that he who is united to

the life of God can never die: for God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. While the wicked are to perish with the world which they inhabit, the children of God are *heirs with Christ of an eternal kingdom.*

The Church is also holy, when by the word Church, we understand the building or place in which the people assemble to accomplish the service of God. As the world, on the other hand, hath always had its unholy places of assembly, its theatre, its idol temples, &c. which unsanctify and pollute those who frequent them. Under the Jewish State of the Church, the temple is called the *holy temple*, or *holy place*; (*Heb.*) and a part of it was called the *most holy place*. Our Saviour allows that the temple *sanctified the gold*, which was offered in it, and consequently all other offerings and sacrifices there made. Now, if that temple was holy, whose glory was to be done away, certainly the place of christian worship, called the Church, must be holy also. For why was the Temple at Jerusalem holy, but because the presence of God attended it? And has he not promised to be in the midst of us? And must not our churches therefore be holy upon the same account? And are they not guilty of a great sin, who treat any church with irreverence?

Irreverence? Much more if they despise or defile it? For it is said, *he that defileth the temple of God, him shall God destroy.*

But nothing will shew us the difference between the world and the church so effectually, as when we consider who is at the head of each society. Christ is the *head of the church*, and the Devil is the *prince of this world*, who is also called the *God of this world*. They who are in the church, are in the kingdom of Christ; which, though not *of this world*, as not deriving its power from thence, is yet *in the world*. They who are *of this world*, are in the kingdom of Satan, and under his power: as the heathens are said to have been before they were redeemed from it, and brought over to the kingdom of God: which translation was signified by the redemption of the Hebrews, from under the power of Pharaoh.

If we enquire into the respective characters of the head of the church, and the prince of this world, as they are described under a variety of names, the opposition is wonderful; and it will be found very instructive, because there is the same opposition betwixt the children of each.

The head of the church is called *Jesus* the *Saviour*: the head of this world is a *destroyer*; in Hebrew, *Abaddon*: in Greek, *Apollyon*.

The

The one is the *true light*, that is, a spiritual light to the soul of man; the other is the *prince of darkness*.

The one is a *shepherd*, gathering the lambs with his arm, and feeding his flock; the other is a *lion* who goeth to and fro in the earth, *seeking whom he may devour*.

The one is a *lamb*; meek, innocent, and spotless: the other is a *serpent*; deceitful, subtle, and with poison under his lips.

The one is the physician of souls, who went about healing the sick, and raising the dead: the other is the inflicter of diseases, *bowing* men down with infirmities; binding them with the bonds of affliction; and was *a murderer from the beginning*; for he brought death into the world, by the temptation of man in Paradise. Men murder individuals; but Satan murders a whole world at once: and is the prince of murderers.

The one delivers men who are under temptation to sin, the other is the *tempter*, who leads them into it. And as the one is the *advocate* of sinners, interceding for them as their *priest* and *mediator*; the other is the grand *accuser*, who is therefore called the *Devil*, which signifies an accuser.

And lastly (for I think we need go no farther

ther at present) the one is the *truth*, the other is a *liar*, and the *father of lies*.

The like difference is found in the children of this world, and the children of the kingdom of God; that is, between the *wicked world*, who are under the *power of Satan*, and the *Holy Church*, which is the *flock of Christ*, and takes him for its pattern. It cannot be otherwise; the spirit of the head must be diffused through the members: and you will see it to be true: first, with respect to the Holy Church of Christ; whose disciples are taught to relieve one another in their wants, and save one another in their distress; rejoicing and suffering together, as the members of the same body; and doing good unto all men. His ministers are *shepherds*; his followers, from the first ages of Christianity, were *accounted* and treated as *sheep for the slaughter*, and were patient and unresisting. They exhort and encourage one another to good works, and being united together under a bond of peace, their *charity covereth a multitude of sins*; that is, it hideth and concealeth the many failings of their brethren for the love of Christ, instead of aggravating their offences, and judging them unmercifully. They are children of light, who derive the light of wisdom from the word of God; and walk openly and honestly,

as

as in the day. In their conversation, they are true and faithful, and give you a direct answer, without disguise or subterfuge.

Such ought to be the members of the holy Church of Christ; this is the character intended for them, though many fall short of it, and some totally depart from it. But the visible church membership of men, does not depend upon their manners and opinions; nor indeed upon any thing they can do for themselves; because it is the gift of God, by his ministers; so that a man in a holy church may be an unholy man: for the kingdom of heaven, or church of Christ, is like a net cast into the sea, which gathers of every kind both bad and good; and an effectual separation is never made between them, till the angels drag this net to the shore, to gather the good into vessels, and cast the bad away. If we bear this case in mind, it will deliver us from a great deal of perplexity. It is truly a sorrowful fact, that the children of God, in too many instances, depart from their proper character: but the character proper to the world is, in all respects, like that of Satan, wicked and miserable.

As the Devil is the prince of this world, his children set their affections upon it; and it is
the

the main purpose of their lives to obtain and enjoy it at any rate. For this they sell their souls, and if they get the world in exchange, they think they are gainers by the bargain.

As he is the prince of darkness, so do they fall into ignorance, and blindness of heart, and love darkness rather than light, that their deeds may not be reprov'd. They hate the word of God, as owls and bats hate the day-light; and dispute fiercely for their errors, lest information and conviction should bring them to repentance.

As the Devil is a *destroyer*, so do the children of this world destroy one another. Their wise politics produce war and desolation; their error and delusion of mind stir them up to the persecution of the servants of God: and wherever we see oppression, and cruelty, and persecution, there we see the spirit of the Devil, the father of persecution, who, by violence, will terrify and compel, where he cannot persuade.

As he is a serpent, so his children are a generation of vipers, double-tongued, and deceitful; smooth and flattering on some occasions, but waiting to give a deadly bite when they are offended and provoked. Their way is crooked and uncertain, like the path of a serpent.

pent. An honest man, whose path is direct and plain, can never tell what to make of them, because they pretend to be going one way, while they are going another; and they often gain their end by it; as the twistings of the serpent carry him to the point he aims at.

As Lucifer fell from Heaven for rebellion, all his children are impatient under authority; and in this capacity they are called *sons of Belial*; which means, that they can bear no superior. Patience, and obedience, and submission, are essential to the Christian character. Christ himself is our pattern, who allowed that the power of Pilate, so unjustly exercised, was *given him from above*, and submitted to his sentence, when he could have struck him dead upon his bench. But resistance is the Devil's doctrine, and the world's practice. The Gospel teaches us, that the things which are highly esteemed among men are an abomination in the sight of God, and here we see it verified; nothing is more detestable to the God of peace, than the sin of rebellion; and nothing is more magnified and applauded by the children of this world; who have set what they call *the power of the people*, above the power of God Almighty. He ordains government, and kings are his ministers; but the
people

people are told, that they have power to overthrow his ordinance, and judge his vice-generals.

As the Devil is a *tempter*, his children act under him in that capacity: most wicked men have a strange desire to make all others as wicked as themselves. The world is full of seducers, who tempt men to false principles, and immorality of life. Some get their livelihood by the corruption of other people; and most infidels and heretics are so diligent in spreading their opinions, that if the friends of truth were equally zealous, the world would not be able to stand against them.

As the Devil is the grand accuser, so doth the world delight itself in evil-speaking. Rail-
ing and slandering is their great amusement. Evil words are not pointed against evil things. The world delights to asperse those, who are unlike to themselves. There never was a good man, nor ever will be, who was not evil spoken of, and depreciated in the judgment of the public; and the rule is so universal, that our Saviour saith to all Christians, *Woe be unto you, when all men speak well of you.* False prophets were well spoken of by the people; and there must be something false and spurious,
some

some *evil with the appearance of good**, in every popular character that pleases the world.

As the Devil is the father of lies, so all they that are of the Devil are liars, who will never make a scruple of a lie to hurt others, or serve themselves. The whole Heathen religion was one great lie, in opposition to the truth of the Divine law. Much evil is threatened to those who put evil for good, and good for evil; who make the heart of the righteous sad, by predicting evil to them, and by promising happiness and prosperity to the wicked. Thus did they speak of old, who were called *false Prophets*; and it would be happy for us if there were none of them amongst us: but, wherever they are found, they are the ministers of Satan: and how fair and fine they may speak on some occasions, it is no proof of their goodness; for Satan is sometimes, as it serves his purpose, *transformed into an angel of light*, and affects an holy and heavenly character; and then he is most a Devil, because he can most deceive.

* Καλὸν κακὸν οὐτ' αγαθόν. HESIOD.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE MEANS OF GRACE, AND THE MARKS
BY WHICH THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS TO
BE KNOWN.

HAVING explained the nature of these two societies, the Holy Church and the wicked World; we must consider the use of the Church, and the marks by which it is to be known: It is promised, *that he who believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.* But how shall we have this baptism, unless we have it from those whom God hath appointed to baptize? It is also promised, *he that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life:* and how shall we receive the body and blood of Christ, but from the Church, to whom he said, when he instituted the Lord's Supper, *Do this in remembrance of me?* This being the com-

memorative Sacrifice of the New Testament, it can be offered only by a priest: and all the world cannot make a priest. The ministers of the Old Testament were ordained to their office by an immediate commission from God to Moses, the mediator of that time betwixt God and the people. The ministers of the New Testament were ordained by Christ himself; from whom the authority descended to others, and shall reach through a variety of hands, to the *end of the world*.

This is the way God hath been pleased to take, to make men holy, and bring them to himself, through this dangerous world, as he brought Noah and his family out of the old world into the new, by means of an ark, which was a figure of his Church. It is therefore of infinite consequence, that we should be able to know, with certainty, whether we are in the Church or out of it. If we are out of it, we are *in the world*. If we had been out of the ark, we should have been drowned. It is true, we may be in the Church, and yet be lost; for was not Ham in the ark, who was a reprobate? But if we are out of the Church, how can we be saved?

I would not, for the whole world, unworthy as I am; I say, I would not, for the whole world,

world, and all the kingdoms of it, be in doubt, whether I was *translated*, or not, into the *kingdom* of Jesus Christ. I would not be in doubt, whether I have the *Sacraments*, or whether I have them not. But how can I be sure in this case, unless I know *what* the kingdom of Christ is; *where* it is to be found; and what are the *marks* by which it may be known? Many strange abuses in religion have arisen on occasion, and under the specious name of, *the Reformation*; a very good word; but it hath been applied to a great many bad things, even to madness and blasphemy. We are fallen into times when some say, *lo, here is Christ*, or, *lo, there*; in the *desert*; or in the *secret chambers*; and are bid to *take heed* that no man *deceive* us. What a terrible case should we be in, if we had no sufficient warnings given to us, and no rule to go by! But as the lightning which cometh from the East shineth unto the West, so plain and notorious was the establishment of Christ's kingdom in this world; together with the form of its constitution, and the orders of its ministry, in all the countries wherever it was planted. It would be unreasonable; indeed it would be lamentable; it would seem as if God had mocked us, contrary to the nature of his mercy,

that he should publish a way of salvation, and leave it uncertain where it is to be found.

From what is said of it in the Gospel, it is impossible that the Church should be a society obscure and hard to be distinguished. *Ye are the light of the world*, said Christ to his disciples, *a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid*. Light is sure to shew itself; and it comes in strait lines, which direct us to its source. A city placed upon a mountain is so elevated above other objects, that it cannot be difficult to find it; rather, it is impossible to miss it; it *cannot be hid*: and Christian people in all ages seem to have agreed, that it shall not be hid: for when we approach a city in any part of Christendom, the churches are generally first seen towering over all other buildings.

Christ has given us a precept, that under certain circumstances, we should *tell* our case to the *Church*: but unless it be known what and where the Church is, this cannot be done. The precept therefore supposes, that the Church must be known to us. The same must follow from the injunction of St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews.—*Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account.* Chap. xiii. 17. The Rulers of the Church
must

must therefore be known to us: for it is impossible we should do our duty, and submit ourselves to them, unless we are sure who they are.

The Church then must, in its nature, be a society manifest to all men. Some may slight it, and despise it, and refuse to hear it; but they cannot do even this, unless they know where it is to be found.

When we enquire more particularly what the Church is, it may be best to proceed as we are obliged to do in some other cases; first, to learn what it is not; that we may go upon right ground, and understand with more certainty what it is.

The Church then, as a society, is not the work of man; nor can it possibly be so. I have laid the foundation of all my reasonings upon this subject, in the distinction betwixt the Church and the World, as two separate parties. The Church is so named*, because it is *called* or *chosen out of* the world. 'Till it is so called out of the world, it hath no being; but it cannot call itself, any more than a man can bring himself into the world.

Our Christian calling is as truly the work of God, and as much independent of ourselves as

E E 3

our

* In Greek Εκκλησια.

our natural birth. The Church must have orders in it for the work of the ministry: but no man can ordain himself, neither can he (of himself) ordain another, because no man can give what he hath not. *How shall they preach, saith the Scripture, unless they be sent?* And again, *no man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.* Nay, even *Christ glorified not himself to be made an High Priest, but he that said unto him, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* The Church must have *promises*; without which it can have no reason or encouragement to act: but no man can give it those promises; which are *exceeding great and precious.* The Church must have *power*, without which it can do nothing to any effect: but there is *no power but of God.* It must have power to forgive sins; the *forgiveness of sins* in the Holy Catholic Church, being an article of the Apostles Creed: but *who can forgive sins, but God only?* It must act in the name of God, or not at all; because it acts for the salvation of man: but no man can act in the name of God, but by God's appointment. No ambassador ever sent himself, or took upon him to sign or seal treaties and covenants (such as the Sacraments of the Church are) without being sent; that is, without

without receiving authority so to do, from an higher power. The act would be so far from beneficial, that it would be treasonable. If an army were to raise itself without commissions, what would such an army be but a company of banditti, leagued together to plunder and destroy the honest subjects of an established community?

Nothing therefore is plainer, on these considerations, than that the Church neither is, nor can be from man. It is no human institution; and as it acts under God, if it acts at all, it must act by his authority and appointment. It is properly called the *Church of God*, (of the *living God*, in opposition to the profane societies self-erected for the worship of dead idols) and mankind might as reasonably presume to make God's World as to make God's Church.

Farther enquiry will shew us that the Church is no confused multitude of people, independent of one another, and subject to no common rules: but a regular society, like to other societies, in some respects, and unlike them all in others. It is called *a body, a family, a city, a kingdom*. A body is a regular structure, the limbs of which being joined together, are subordinate and subservient to one another, and are animated by the same soul or spirit. So saith

the Apostle, *for by one spirit we are all baptized into one body.* 1 Cor. xii. 13. It being also called a *family*, the members of it must have some common *relation* to one another: being called a *city*, it must be *incorporated* under some common *laws*; and being a *kingdom*, it must have some form of *government* and magistracy. Families, cities, and kingdoms are societies; and the Church, being represented by them, must be a regular society. But in this the Church differs from all other societies, because they belong to this world, and their rights and privileges are confined to it: whereas the Church extends to both worlds, the visible and the invisible, and is partly on earth, and partly in Heaven. In its earthly members it is visible; in its rulers, it is visible; in its worship, it is visible; in its sacraments, it is visible. But being also a spiritual society, it hath a *life* which is *hidden*, and in the inward and spiritual Grace of all its outward ordinances it is invisible. As a kingdom in which God is Judge, and Christ is a Mediator, and Angels and Saints departed, are members; it takes in the heaven itself, and is the *heavenly Jerusalem*, which is the *mother of us all*; insomuch, that when we are admitted into it, our *conversation is in Heaven*, and the Angels of Heaven are our *fellow-servants*; all
making

making one great family under Jesus Christ, in whom *all things are gathered together in one, both which are in Heaven, and which are on earth*: on which consideration, what is rightly done in the Church on earth, stands good in Heaven, as if it had been done there; and the Apostles of Christ received from him the *keys of the kingdom of Heaven*, with a power of *binding and loosing*, which extends to Heaven itself: and when Christians go to Heaven, they are not carried into a new society, for they are already, by the grace of God, translated into it by baptism; whence the Apostle speaks of their translation, not as a thing expected, but even now brought to pass. *He hath translated us, &c.* Col. i. 13.

The Church doth also differ from other societies, in that it is catholic or universal; it extends to all places, and all times, and is not confined to the people of any nation, or condition of life, but takes in Jews, Greeks, and Barbarians, the rich and the poor, the bond and the free; and is therefore properly signified in one of our Saviour's parables by an *inn*, where all that offer themselves are accepted. The commission of Christ to his Apostles, was to *teach and baptize all nations*.

The Church being a kingdom, not of this world,

world, is of a spiritual nature, and in that capacity it is invisible ; but as a kingdom in this world, it is visible, and must have a visible administration. To know what this is, and whence its authority is derived, we must go back to the gospel itself.

Jesus Christ was sent from Heaven by the Father, and invested with the glory of the priesthood by an actual consecration, when the spirit descended upon him. As the Father hath sent him, *so did he send his disciples*, and gave them authority to send others : so that the Church which followed, derived its authority from the Church which Christ first planted in the world ; and the Church at this day must derive its authority after the same manner, by succession from the Church which went before ; the line extending from Christ himself to the end of the world : *lo, said he, I am with you always, unto the end of the world* : certainly, not with those very persons, who all soon died, but with those who should succeed, and be accounted for the same ; for a body corporate never dies, till its succession is extinct*.

Our

* “Take away this succession, and the Clergy may as well be ordained by one person as another : a number of women may as well give them a divine commission ;—but they are no more Priests of God, than those who pretend to make

Our Saviour at first ordained his twelve Apostles according to the number of the tribes of the Church of Israel. Afterwards he ordained other seventy, according to the number of the Elders, whom Moses appointed as his assistants. When the Church in Jerusalem was multiplied, seven deacons were ordained, by the laying on of the hands of the Apostles, to preach, and baptize, and minister, in distributing the alms of the Church. Here then we have three orders of men, each distinct from the other; the twelve Apostles, the seventy Disciples, and the seven Deacons; and by these the first Christian Church in Jerusalem was governed and administered. The Apostles were superior in office to the Disciples; because, when Judas fell from the apostleship, one was chosen by lot out of the Disciples into the apostleship: the Deacons were inferior to both; and it appears that they were appointed by the laying on of the hands of the twelve Apostles; for it is said, Acts vi. 2, "*the Twelve called the multitude of the Disciples unto them,*" &c.—

That

make them so. If we had lost the Scriptures, it would be very well to make as good books as we could, and come as near them as possible: but then it would not only be folly, but presumption, to call them the word of God." See the *second Letter to the Bishop of Bangor*: Postscript.

That the Apostles appointed others to succeed to their own order, is evident from the case of Timothy; who in the ancient superscription, at the end of the second Epistle, is said to have been *ordained the first Bishop* of the Church of the Ephesians. He is admonished *to lay hands suddenly on no man*; therefore he had power to ordain: and he is likewise admonished *not to receive an accusation against an Elder* (or Presbyter), *but before two or three witnesses*: therefore he had a judicial authority over that order. Directions are given with respect to the Deacons of the same Church; therefore, in the first Church of the Ephesians, there was a Bishop, with Elders and Deacons under him; as in the Church which began at Jerusalem, there was the order of the Apostles, of the Disciples, and of the Deacons. In the Christian Church, throughout the world, we find these three orders of ministers for fifteen hundred years, without interruption. The fact therefore is undeniable, that the Church has been governed by Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, from the Apostles downwards; and where we find these orders of ministers duly appointed, the word preached, and the sacraments administered, there we find the Church of Christ, with its form, and its authority.

The

The wisdom of God is here very evident, in appointing the orders of the Christian ministry after the pattern of the Jewish Church, which was of his own appointment so long before.— That there might be no uncertainty in a case of such consequence to the souls of men, there was no novelty, but a continuation of the like administration with that which had all along been known and acknowledged in the Church. *Aaron* was an *High Priest*, with a ministry peculiar to himself; under him there was an order of *Priests*, twenty-four in number, who served *by course* in the daily sacrifices and devotions of the Tabernacle and Temple; and these were assisted by the whole tribe of the *Levites*. As the law had its passover, its baptisms, its incense, its sacrifices, its consecrations, its benedictions, all to be realized under the sacraments and offerings of the gospel; so its ministry was but a pattern of the ministry which is now amongst us; and we cannot mistake the one, if we have an eye to the other; such is the goodness of God in directing and keeping us, through all the confusions of the latter days, by a rule of such great antiquity, to the way of truth, and keeping us in it.

The great use of the Church is to receive and minister

minister to the salvation of those who are taken out of the world: but this it cannot do without the truth of the Christian doctrine; the Church is therefore as an instrument, or candlestick, for the holding and preserving of this sacred light. It is called the *pillar and ground of the truth*; not as if it had any right of making or imposing doctrines of its own; for the ground and the pillar do not make the roof, they only support it; nor doth the candlestick make the light, it only holds the light. And these similitudes will be found just, if we pursue them farther; for as when the pillars are removed, the building must fall; and when the lamp or the candlestick is broken, the light will be extinct: so if the Church be taken away, the truth falls along with it; as we have seen, and do see, in this country. Our Quakers, who are farthest from the Church, are totally departed from the truth of Christian doctrine; and many of those separate congregations, who were Puritans and Believers in the last age, are Socinians and Infidels in this: a consideration which should prevail upon sincere people of all persuasions, who believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, to lay aside their animosity, and unite against the Socinians, who are the common enemies

mies of all Christian people; and are now endeavouring to overthrow the faith of our creeds and articles.

When we speak of the *use* of the Church, we should never forget the great benefit and information which arises from the *fasts* and *festivals* of the Church; (totally neglected by the sectaries) by the course of which, the piety of Christians is directed to all the great subjects of the gospel: some of which might otherwise never be revived in our thoughts during the whole year. But the Church spends its year with Jesus Christ, and follows him in faith, through all the great works of his mediatorial office, from his *advent* to the sending down of the Holy Ghost on the day of *Pentecost*. On this ground, the work of Mr. *Nelson* is of great value to all Christian families; and we have reason to hope it will never fall into disuse; though all persons, fanatically inclined, are very cold to the merits of it, and the sectaries, it is to be supposed, must reject it on their own principles.

Here I must add, that the wisdom of God is farther manifest, in appointing a provision for his ministers, *independent of the people*. The maintenance of the Jewish priesthood was from God; for the tythes and offerings, on which they

they lived, were first *dedicated* to God, and *from him* transferred for the support of his ministry. So doth he himself state the case by the prophet: *Ye have robbed me*, saith he, *in tithes and offerings*; as if they were his own property: and so they were; for being dedicated to God, the first proprietor of all things, they belong to him before they belong to his Church. The wisdom and piety of christian states followed the rule of the scripture from the earliest times; and it still obtains in this country. And what would be the consequence if it were not so? While the minister depends only upon the God to whom he is accountable, he dares speak the truth: but where he is dependent on the people, and the people are corrupt, then he must accommodate himself to their fancy. For this reason, if the people of a congregation, who chuse their own minister, fall into heresy, they rarely or never get out of it, because they will bear no teacher, but one who is of their own persuasion, and will flatter them in their errors.

I have nothing more to say upon the nature of the Church, but to shew the extent of its authority. Every society must have power over its own members, to *admit* or *exclude* as the case requires: it cannot otherwise subsist.

The

The Church, from the days of the Apostles, always exercised the power of excommunicating notorious offenders, and of absolving and restoring true penitents. Excommunication is nothing but a reversing of baptism; and they who have authority to baptize, must have authority to excommunicate. The Church must also have authority in directing its own worship and services, as to time, place, ceremonies.—*Let all things be done decently and in order:* but what is *decency*, and what is *order*, is not specified, and must be left to the discretion of the rulers of the Church. The Church has no authority to ordain any thing contrary to the law of God; nor doth the law of God depend upon the authority of the Church. There are three sorts of things about which the Church is conversant; *good, bad, and indifferent*: the good oblige by their own nature; the bad cannot be enforced by any authority: therefore the authority of the Church must extend to things indifferent, that is to order and discipline, to circumstances of time, place, forms of worship, ceremonies, and such like: and to disobey because they are indifferent is to deny that God hath given power to his Church to regulate any one thing whatsoever.

Ought we not, on the foregoing considera-

tions, to magnify the goodness and wisdom of God, who hath provided a Church for the reception of lost mankind, and given to it the light of truth, and the means of grace? No subject can be plainer than this of the nature and constitution of the Church: and the necessity of its ministry and ordinances to the salvation of man, and the preservation of truth, charity, peace, and godliness, is as clear as the sun. What a blessed thing it would be for us, if all people could see this! What temptations, corruptions, tumults, and miseries, would it prevent amongst mankind! But alas! they are ever ingenious in defeating the purposes of God for their own good. They have ways and expedients, not only of making themselves easy without the benefits of the Christian Church, but of actually casting them all off with a high hand, as needless, superstitious, dangerous, and even sinful, and anti-christian; not helps to salvation, but hindrances. How this matter is, and with what reasonings they deceive themselves; we shall discover with very little inquiry.

CHAPTER III.

THE ERRORS, WHICH TEMPT MEN TO LEAVE
THE CHURCH, AND MAKE THEM EASY
WHEN THEY ARE SEPARATED FROM IT.

THE means of grace, and the promises of God, being with his Church, they who would be made partakers of them, must apply to the Church: and who would not? Who would not willingly flee from Sodom on fire to take refuge in Zoar? When the storm is abroad, the beasts have sense to fly to a place of shelter: and as the wrath of God is denounced against this world, men must be enemies to themselves, if they refuse to be delivered in the way which God hath appointed. But we know nothing of this world, if we think all men are friends to their own spiritual interest. Many will rather have recourse to their own imaginations: and

when pride hath got possession of them, they are above being directed.

The example of Naaman is very instructive on this part of our subject. When he was ordered to seek the cure of his leprosy, by washing seven times in Jordan, the proud Syrian refused to comply with the ceremony, because he could not see how it should have any effect. Nevertheless, when he had thought better of it, that ceremony, unaccountable and useless as it might seem to his carnal reason, cured him of his distemper. By the Church and its ordinances, every Christian is put to the same trial; whether he will submit to such things as reason cannot account for? Whether he will look for an effect, to which the cause is not adequate, without the interposition of an invisible power? The children of God are still exercised by this trial. Some accept the terms proposed; they believe the promises of God, and are saved.—Of the rest, some do not see how they can be saved in this manner; and others spend their lives in vanity, and never think whether they can or cannot. Men are influenced by two principles totally opposite, *sight* and *faith*: the Christian walks by *faith* and not by *sight*; the disputer of this world believes nothing but what he sees, and so is incapable of the benefits of Christianity.

Christianity. It does not appear to him how power can come from Heaven, and be delivered down in succession by the imposition of hands : how water, which washes the body, can *wash away sins* ; how bread can be made the vehicle of spiritual life ; so he lives and dies the dupe of a dead philosophy, which admits of nothing spiritual in a religion whose benefits are all of a spiritual kind.

From the nature of the Church, we see how necessary it is, that men should be taken into it out of this wicked world. We see how the promises of God are confined to the ordinances of the Church ; and that there can be no assurance of salvation without them. If we reflect on these things, we cannot but consider it as an inestimable blessing, that God hath appointed such a plain and certain way of leading us through the means of grace to the hope of glory. We may perhaps wonder *why* men should endeavour to deprive themselves of these benefits ; and how christian people, so called, can satisfy themselves under a causeless departure from the great law of peace and charity. I will therefore proceed to shew how they deceive themselves. There are three false principles, which, if admitted, would supersede the necessity of any Church.

The first of these is the doctrine of an absolute unconditional election to salvation. For if God, by a mere act of his sovereign will, and according to an irresistible decree, elects men to eternal salvation, without regard to conditions and circumstances; then no visible ordinances are necessary as means of grace; they are all superseded, and we are as safe without them as with them. This doctrine is so convenient to all the irregular classes of Christian people, who have cast off the Church and its authority, that it has been much insisted upon almost from the beginning of the Reformation; and has done infinite mischief. For he who is divided from his brethren, with this doctrine in his mind, is thereby confirmed and fortified in his errors. In vain shall we recommend the benefits of Church communion to him, who is saved in consequence of a decree, made before the Church or the world had a being. God hath elected him, without any regard to outward ordinances; and so the want of those ordinances can never render his election of no effect. And supposing his doctrine to be true, who can deny the consequence? But the doctrine is false. Thus much of it is true; that, according to the scripture, man is chosen, or *elected, out of the world*, by the free grace of God, without any respect to his own works,

works, (of which he can have none till he is called ; being in the state of an unborn infant) and brought into God's Church, where he is in a state of salvation. But he may fall from this state, or be cast out of it by the authority which brought him into it, and forfeit all the privileges of his election ; therefore the Apostle gives us this warning : *let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall :* and St. Peter bids us *give diligence to make our calling and election sure.* How can that be, if we are elected to salvation, by an irreversible decree ? We need take no pains to make that sure, which in its nature is irreversible. Paul was a vessel *chosen of God ;* and yet this same Paul supposes it possible for him to fall from the grace of God, and become a *castaway* *. Election, therefore, as it is spoken of in the Scripture, hath been grossly misunderstood : for there is no such thing there

FF 4

as

* Another proof of this argument may be found in 1 Cor. 8, c. xi. " Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother *perish* for *whom Christ died ?*" The true notion of predestination is to be met with in Eph. 1, c. xi. xii. where those are said to be predestinated to the praise of God's glory *who trusted in Christ.* Our attainment of eternal happiness is the *consequence* of our belief in Christ, and the irreversible decree of God is, that those that believe in him should not perish, and this is probably the only sense in which the doctrine of predestination and election can be maintained from Scripture.

as any election of individuals to final salvation, independent of the ordinances of the Church. Election is an inward and spiritual grace; but there is no such thing administered to man without some outward sign. A man might tell us that he is *ordained* to preach the gospel: but we know this can never be without the *laying on of hands*. He may tell us he is one of God's elect; and if the reality of his election were to depend upon his own report, how should we confute him, although he were guilty of all manner of wickedness? If we believe him on his own authority, we may be tempted to be as wicked as he is: and multitudes have, by this doctrine, corrupted one another, and fallen into what is called *Antinomianism*; a neglect of God's commandments, as not necessary to those who are elected independent of works and sacraments. To secure us from all such delusions, God hath affixed some outward sign or pledge to all his inward gifts, to assure us of their reality, and prevent imposture. Therefore, where there is an inward calling, there is an outward calling with it; where there is regeneration, there is the sacrament of baptism; and the gospel knows of no regeneration without it. I might shew how this doctrine of absolute election is dishonourable to God, and contrary to his

his

his most express declarations. How it encourages some to presumption, pride, and ungodly living*; and how it drives others to despair and distraction†, who have not, nor can bring themselves to an assurance of their own personal election to the favour of God: but my business in this place is only to remark, how convenient this doctrine is to all those who do not come to God in the ordinary way of his institutions, nor can prove themselves to be members of his Church.

A second

* I remember a woman in a country parish, who used to boast much of her own *experiences*, and insult the people of the church as reprobates; *goats* who were to be placed on the *left hand*, at the day of judgment; while she and her party were the true elect, the *sheep* who were to be placed on the right hand. Such was the usual strain of her conversation. But after a time, I heard that this *elect lady* was gone off with the husband of another woman. She was a severe critic on the Clergyman of the parish, as one who had many Popish actions, because he made a practise of turning to the East when he repeated the Creed; and though he was much attended to as a preacher, she said it all signified no more than the *barking of a dog*.

† When Dr. *Sparrow* was Bishop of Exeter, there rarely passed a day without a note or notes brought to Priest, Vicar, or Reader, for the prayers of the congregation, for persons *troubled in mind* or *possessed*; which, as some judicious persons conjectured, was occasioned by the frequent preaching up of the rigid *Predestination* doctrines in some places in that city.

Preface to the *View of the Times*.

A second doctrine, on the ground of which men place themselves above the Church, is that of immediate inspiration. For if men are now receiving new direction from Heaven, and God speaks in them as he did in Moses, and the Prophets, and the Apostles, they have no need to consult either the Scriptures or the Church : for they are independent of both, and have an higher rule. This is the reason why no impression can ever be made upon a Quaker, by arguments from the Scripture. He answers, that the Scriptures (as applied by us who do not understand them) cannot be brought in evidence against him ; because (to speak in the Quaker language) he has within himself the same spirit that gave forth the Scriptures ; and the Revelation which has past must give place to that which is present. Nothing blinds the eyes of men so effectually as pride ; whence he who is vain enough to believe, that he is under the direction of immediate inspiration, must believe many other strange things. Such people therefore never fail to despise the ministry and worship of the Church, and make light of all its institutions. The Apostles of Jesus Christ foreseeing by a true revelation, that there would be false pretensions to inspiration in the Christian Church, as there were false prophets

prophets among the people of the Jews, give us warning not to *believe every spirit*, (that is, not to believe all those who pretend to speak by the spirit) but to *try them* whether they speak by the spirit of *truth*, or the spirit of *error*. There are many good rules to direct us on this occasion: but there is one which every body can understand. The spirit of truth is the spirit of love, and peace, and unity: the spirit of error is the spirit of hatred, and contention, and discord. The former tends to unite men into one body; the latter sets them at variance, and divides them into parties. *Beloved*, saith St. John, *let us love one another; for every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God.* When the great rule of Charity is broken, and men lay claim to the spirit of God while they have no title to it, then they are open to the delusions of evil spirits: and accordingly many have uttered hideous blasphemies, under a persuasion that they are speaking by the spirit of God. Some have proceeded so far as to personate God himself*. Certain it is, that

* In the beginning of this century, there was a sect of *Camisat Quakers* in London, in whose assemblies persons of both sexes, particularly young girls, pretended to deliver prophecies,

that the sect who have departed farthest from the Church and its ordinances, are the most forward in their pretensions to immediate inspiration; and even where this is pretended to in a lesser degree, a contempt for the Church and its ministry seldom or never fails to attend upon it in the same proportion*.

A third doctrine which makes the Church of no effect, is the sufficiency of *moral virtue*; and a perilous doctrine it is. It comes forward with a more sober face, but it hath less of the Gospel than of Enthusiasm or Predestination. For on this ground, a man need be of no Church, of no sect, nor even a Christian believer; because moral honesty, which forbears
thieving

prophecies, with strange screamings and distortions. One of these people, (horrible to relate) was seen to take another by the arm, and looking him broad in the face, said, *Do you not acknowledge me to be the eternal and unchangeable God?* To which the other, falling down and trembling, answered, *I do acknowledge thee, &c.* Many fine people from the court-end of the town, who would have paid but little respect to the benediction of a Bishop, were seen bending their knees, for a blessing, to these frantic females. See *View of the Times*, vol. 4, p. 235.

* The author of the *Snake in the Grass* prefixed a most excellent preface to that work, on the Enthusiasm of *Antonia Bourignon*; shewing the original and tendency of hers and every other delusion of the same kind; which preface the reader will do well to consult.

thieving and cheating, may be found in a Turk or an Heathen. When people would appear to be what they are not, and endeavour to supply their defects by fine words and plausible pretences, we call them hypocrites: and I will assure the Reader, there is a great deal of cant in the world, beside that of fanaticism and affected devotion. Impiety can act the hypocrite upon occasion, and magnify moral virtue when it is set in opposition to the love of God. It is not unusual for persons to praise a man's character; not because they love his virtues, but because they hate his rival. So do some bad men praise morality, because they hate devotion. This is too frequently the case with those who make a false estimate of what they call a *good life*; leaving out the duties most essential to the life of a good Christian; and these are a very large party. Heresy and schism, till they turn into profligacy, never fail to descant upon the sufficiency of moral duties; and in this they are joined by the whole tribe of Deists, Infidels, and Moral Philosophers, who are glad to hear of a rule of morality, (such, by the way, as themselves are to define and determine) which will serve them as a substitute for the Christian life, and all the forms of Church devotion. Here also
we

we find those Christians, who live in the habitual neglect of the means of grace. I have heard people who never were at the altar, and perhaps never intended it, comforting themselves with this consideration, that they never did any *harm* to any body: when they should rather have asked themselves, what *good* they ever did to themselves, or to any body else, for the *love of God*? Without which, all the virtues of man are nothing; and if he places any dependence upon them, they are worse than nothing. If a man is to be saved by the Christian religion, he must be a Christian in his life: but simple morality is not Christianity: it has neither *faith, hope, charity, prayer, fasting, nor alms*, which are the duties of the Christian life. If we mean to serve God, we must serve him in his Church, and conform to its ordinances. If we do good to our neighbours, we must do it on a principle of faith; and a cup of cold water given on this principle, is of more value in the sight of God, than all the treasures of the Indies, if they are distributed from the proud heart of unbelief: and he is certainly in unbelief, who doth not direct himself by the rules, and act upon the principles, which God hath delivered to the Church.

Nearly related to the sufficiency of moral virtue,

tue, is the principle of *sincerity*, which was set up in the last age, as sufficient of itself to justify man in the sight of God, independent of the authority and benefits of his Church: so that if a man be not a *hypocrite*, it matters not what religion he is of. If sincerity, as *such*, independent of any particular way of worship, can recommend man to the favour of God, then there can be no difference as to merit between a sincere martyr, and a sincere persecutor: and he that burns a Christian, if he be but in earnest, hath the same title to God's favour, as he that is burnt for believing in Jesus Christ. This position, (in the sense of it) absurd and monstrous as it must appear, was the support of a controversy in this kingdom, in which a Bishop led the way *, and was followed and applauded.

* Thus did the famous Bishop *Hoadley* comfort all the Sectaries and Enthusiasts of his time: "When you are secure of your integrity before God—this will lead you not to be afraid of the terrors of men, or the vain words of regular and uninterrupted succession, authoritative benedictions, excommunications—nullity or validity of ordinances to the people on account of niceties and trifles, or any other the like dreams." I can venture to say, there never was a cause more effectually battled and exposed upon earth, than this of Bishop Hoadley, against the Church, and Church Communion, in the *Two Letters* and the *Reply of Mr. William Law*, which every Clergyman of the Church of England ought

plauded by all the libertines and loose thinkers of the nation, who foresaw that the argument would end in the dissolution of the Church as a society: and therefore they made him a thousand compliments.

If we consider how the mind of man is influenced by custom and education, and that his conscience and self-approbation will be according to his principles; then we shall see that sincerity, if admitted, would sanctify all the wickedness under Heaven. St. Paul, as a zealous Jew, *verily thought* (that is, he was *sincerely of opinion*) that he *ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth*; so he persecuted the Christians furiously, and *breathed out threatenings and slaughter*. Now as he had a good meaning in all he did, to what end was he converted, when his sincerity would have saved him in his former way? After his mind was better enlightened, he pronounced himself to have been the *greatest of sinners*, for what he had done in the *sincerity of his heart*.

Thus it would be in all other cases; he that acts sincerely upon bad principles, must be a
bad

ought to read, that he may know what ground he stands upon, and against what enemies he may be called forth to maintain it.

bad man; a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit: and, *not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.* Upon the whole, he that will be saved, must be saved in the way which God hath appointed, and not in any way of his own. We shall be judged at last according to God's word, not according to any persuasions we may have taken up, through the prejudices of education, or the perverseness of our own hearts; all of which are indeed no better than dreams, having no foundation but on that loose bottom of human imagination, on which are built all the visions of the night, and all the heresies in the world.

If these doctrines of *absolute election*, *immediate inspiration*, the sufficiency of *moral virtue*, and justification from *sincerity*, were true; it would follow, that God is unwise, inconsistent, and improvident. For if he appoints a visible Church and its ordinances, as necessary to make us members of the kingdom of Heaven; and if he began the way of salvation by *adding to the Church such as were to be saved*; and yet, with all this, has another *private way of saving men*, by a *secret decree* which has no regard to any outward means; he is inconsistent in ordaining them. And also, as the doctrine of *immediate*

Inspiration, or new Revelation, without any sign or credentials from Heaven, opens a way to every possible delusion of the mind, either from its own vain conceits, or the suggestions of evil spirits; God must be improvident, in not securing us against such dangerous impositions, which may introduce all kinds of wickedness into the world, under the sanction of a divine authority: an impostor having nothing to do, but to persuade himself, as any madman may do, that he acts by immediate inspiration. With this persuasion, men have butchered one another to make bloody baptisms; have set themselves up as kings and rulers of the new Jerusalem; have taken plurality of wives, and blasphemously personated God himself*. All the disorders of the last century were committed by fanatics, who assumed a privilege of seeking the Lord, and consulting, and receiving answers from him; while their minds were bent upon the most horrible crimes of rebellion, robbery, sacrilege, persecution, and murder.

Then as to *moral virtue*, if that can *save* those who are *not added to the Church*, it must follow, that man never was lost, and that Christ
need

* See *Ross's View of all Religions*; particularly the account of the Anabaptists of Germany.

need not have come into the world. If *sincerity* in any persuasion, good or bad, will recommend us to the favor of God; then will lies, if we do but *believe* them, answer all the purposes of *truth*: then is there no difference between good and evil; and it cannot be worth while to convert Jews, Turks, or Heathens, to the gospel, because they are as safe in their own way. Such are the pleas, by which some men of necessity, and some of malignity, seek to justify themselves, when they leave the Church, or despise or neglect its ordinances. But *the foundation of God standeth sure.*

After what hath been said, few words will be wanting to convince any thinking person of the dangers and evil consequences which must attend the sin of causeless separation.

If men for salvation are brought out of the world into the Church, they cannot possibly forsake it, without hazard to their salvation. If the promises of God, and the means of grace, are committed to the Church, we lose them when we leave the Church: at least it will be very hard to prove that we carry them away with us: and who would chuse to be under any uncertainty in a case of such importance?

Another evil is that of breaking the great rule of charity in our worship. We are commanded to glorify God with *one mind and one mouth,*

and all to *speaking the same thing*. How contrary to this is the practice of following different ways of worship, some totally disagreeing with others; and some not deserving the name of any worship at all; for in some of our assemblies people meet for no purpose but to hear one another talk. There is no praying, no confession of sins, no absolution, no thanksgiving, no litany, no sacraments! We read, that the Apostles, when the Holy Ghost descended, were *all with one accord in one place*; and so ought Christians to be, if they would preserve the presence of the spirit amongst them, who is the spirit of unity. And as the spirit of unity in worship disposes men to a more peaceable and charitable temper; so the spirit of division and fanaticism is attended with violence and bitterness of language, and an intolerant persecuting humour toward all who are not fanatics; especially toward the members of the Church of England, which is deservedly placed at the head of the Protestant Reformation*.

There

* An author who put out a *Syllabus of Lectures*, in the year 1778, on the *Principles of Non-conformity*, speaks in the person of Jesus Christ, upon the tribunal of judgment at the last day, and supposes him presenting to the world, on that tremendous occasion, his *faithful servants*, the non-conformist ministers, as the great objects of his favour; and at the same time sending off those *holy tyrants*, the bishops of the

the

There is also great hazard of losing the *doctrines* when we leave the *worship* of the Church.

G G 3

When

the Church of England, into everlasting fire, with that dreadful sentence—*DEPART!* And what are they to be damned for? Because they could not approve of *Non-conformity!* a religion of *negatives!* They saw enough of its fruits to dislike it in former times, from its first appearance in this kingdom: but they did not see, as we do now, that its end is *infidelity*; to which it hath been tending for many years past, and hath now attained it in the writings of Dr. Priestley, and the Unitarian Association. These Lectures, with this dreadful sentence of damnation to the bishops, by Brother Robinson, were approved by the *Easter Association of Essex, at Harlow*, and recommended to the *Sister Churches* by order of all. June 18, 1778. Of what character must these Sister Churches be, if they are of the same spirit with Brother Robinson? Surely they are not *chaste virgins*, presentable to a meek and merciful Saviour, who prayed for his murderers; but unmerciful harlots, cursing and damning the established Church for retaining episcopacy. Had there been no non-conformity, the poor bishops might have escaped like other men, and have been entitled to their chance of mercy, through the merits of their Redeemer, who died for them, and for all men, and sent forth the first bishops by his own immediate authority. What would such Non-conformists do, if they had it in their power, who are provoked to such uncharitable ravings under the present most mild and moderate state of the Church of England?

But the most superlative instance of fanatic malignity I ever yet saw, is to be found in the works of *Milton*, whose malignity was rendered more malignant by the depressed and afflicted condition to which the Church was then reduced.

When the ten tribes revolted from the worship at Jerusalem, they soon lost the truth of their law, and fell into an idolatrous worshipping of the calves they had set up in Dan and Bethel. Their government was troubled with great disorders, and their confusion ended in their utter dispersion. When men leave the worship of the Church,

duced. He was a man of a bright and perfect imagination, and gifted with a wonderful choice of beautiful and descriptive expression. But the weapon is the worse for its sharpness, when malice hath the handling of it: and imagination is a mirror which can reflect the fires of hell as well as the lights of heaven; of which, I think, we have an example in the following invective against the bishops of the Church of England: 'But they—that by the impairing and diminution of the true faith, the distresses and servitude of their country, aspire to high dignity, rule, and promotion here, after a shameful end in this life (which God grant them!) shall be thrown down eternally into the darkest and deepest gulph of hell; where under the despiteful control, the trample and spurn of all the other damned, who, in the anguish of their torture, shall have no other ease than to exercise a raving and beastial tyranny over them, as their slaves and negroes, they shall remain in that plight for ever, the basest, the lowermost, the most dejected, most underfoot, and down trodden vassals of perdition.' Conclusion of *Milton's Treatise on Reformation*, vol. I. p. 274. If it were put to my option, whether I would be an idiot, without a single faculty of mind, or a single sense of the body; or whether I would have *Milton's* imagination, attended with this fiery spirit of fanaticism; I should not hesitate one moment to determine,

Church, it is very natural for them to become disaffected to its doctrines: and they, who hate the Christian Faith, will take part with those who are against the Church; because they foresee, that if the Church be destroyed, the faith will be lost; as the light goes out when the lamp is broken. One of the most blasphemous books that ever was written in this country against the Christian *Faith*, was all of it apparently directed against the *Church*: on which consideration, many, who then believed the Christian doctrines, were drawn in by a disaffection to the Church, to take part with an infidel.

2. I am to remark farther, that with those who are ignorant and ill-instructed in the nature and use of the Church, there is a perverse prejudice in favour of *preaching*; and consequently a shocking neglect of those duties which belong to the people. It is a fine easy way for people with itching years, to hear a preacher talk them into Heaven; while they neglect all the more essential parts of divine worship. Many hear a Sermon with the same vain curiosity as people hear a speech upon a stage, and consult nothing but their own amusement. And while the whole of the ministerial duty is supposed to consist in preach-

ing, a man who can bawl and rant is tempted to take himself for a minister of Jesus Christ, without any regular mission ; of which sort we have multitudes in this kingdom at this time : and it is to be feared they are increasing. It is no uncommon thing for persons of all persuasions to meet in the same Church to hear the same preacher ; many of whom have no communion with one another at any time ; how is a preacher to please such a mixt multitude of hearers, but by leaving the Church of Christ out of the question, and preaching a loose sort of Christianity, which will fit them all ? Perhaps, if he were to speak the plain truth, and, from a sincere regard to their souls, give them such information as they stand in need of, many of them would leave him with indignation : as there were those who would *walk no longer* with Jesus Christ, because they were not able to bear the things that were spoken by him. There is a fashion of inviting people to *come to Christ*, without telling them where and how he is to be found. Besides, it is a great mistake to suppose, that the whole of religion consists in our taking of Christ ; it is beginning at the wrong end : for Christ is to take us, as he took the little children in his arms and gave them
them

them his blessing*. He said to his disciples, *ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.* There is a covenant between us and God, into which God, of his infinite grace, takes us; we do not take him, neither can we: and this confines us to the ordinances of the Church, which are not of us, but are the gifts of God's free grace to us miserable sinners: and Christians are united to God, and to one another, by the services of prayer, and the participation of the sacraments, more than by the hearing of the word of God without them; which many hear for reasons of vanity and uncharitableness. Who are the best friends every minister hath in his parish? They who attend the prayers and sacraments with him: who are edified by his *priesthood* as well as by his *preaching*; and are active in the great work of their own salvation.

3. As the latter times of the Jewish Church were

* Mr. Locke, in his *Reasonableness of Christianity* (a strange piece of divinity) is in the same mistake. He makes baptism a *visible act*, whereby those, who believed Christ to be the Messiah, *received him* as their king. So again in the same style, he says, that by baptism men *enroll themselves* in the kingdom of Jesus; which is but to say in other words, that they *write their own names* in Heaven. From such language as this, it is too apparent, that Mr. Locke's ideas of the Christian Priesthood and Sacraments were exceedingly low.

were very corrupt, and the doctrines of God were rendered of none effect by the inventions of men: it is agreeable to the prophecies of the New Testament, that *offences must come amongst us; that men must arise, out of the Church, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them:* also that many will not endure sound doctrine, but heap up to themselves teachers (of their own appointing) *having itching ears.*

These and many other like passages give us notice, that there must be a falling off from the faith, with confusion and disagreement in the Christian society. If we look at our own Church, we have but a melancholy prospect; and cannot help observing, that it approaches too near to the state of the Jewish Church before its destruction. As they had corrupted the doctrines of Moses and the Prophets, and in consequence of it were divided into sects (for as truth unites, error always divides men) so have we corrupted the doctrines of the Gospel, and are miserably divided in consequence of it. I could name *some doctrines*, which if our Saviour were now to deliver in the metropolis of London, with the same freedom and authority as he did at Jerusalem, I verily believe he would be persecuted and put to death by people called *Christians*,

tians, as he was of old by those who were called *Jews*. The Church of Jerusalem was infested with temporising and philosophising Jews, who were farthest of all others from the faith, while they affected to be wiser than all the rest of the people. The *Sadducees* believed neither Angel nor Spirit, and said there was no Resurrection. The *Herodians* were politicians and men of the world, who flattered Herod that he was the Messiah. The *Pharisees* were a proud sanctified sect, very godly in outward shew, but full of hypocrisy within. They justified themselves and despised others, as not good enough to stand near them, or belong to the same Church with them. Of the sect of the *Essenes* we have no particular account in the New Testament; but from all we can learn, I take them to have been the Quakers of that time, who had thrown off all external rights of worship, and affected a religion perfectly pure and philosophical. The *Sadducees* were the Socinians of Judaism; who had nothing spiritual belonging to them, and had reduced their law to an empty form. The venality and avarice of the Jews of our Saviour's time, was notorious, and provoked his indignation. Their temple, filled with buyers and sellers, was turned into a den of thieves: and, God knows, there is too much of a worldly traffic

traffic amongst us; which is too far gone to be reformed, and too bold to be censured—*venduntur omnia* * !

4. But whatever abuses there may be in the Church, it is our duty to make the best of it. The Church is our spiritual *mother*; and we may apply those words of the wise man, *despise not thy mother when she is old*; not even if she should be in rags and dotage. The doctrine of the Church of England is, by profession, still pure and apostolical; and, whatever faults it may have contracted, it cannot be worse than the Church which our Saviour found in Jerusalem: yet he still recommended to the congregation, the duty of obedience to their spiritual Rulers. *The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do.* Bad as the Church then was, our Saviour never forsook it, but *taught daily in the Temple*: and his Apostles attended upon his worship at the hours of prayer;

* "CHURCH LIVING.

"Two thousand pounds ready for the next Presentation to a Rectory of adequate value, with immediate resignation.—The Advertiser is sixty-five years of age. Apply to Mr. —, Attorney, Holborn."

Perjury, which is now in a very growing state, may, in time, come to market with as much boldness as her sister *Simony* hath done for many years past.

prayer; and probably continued so to do, till they were dispersed. Neither Christ nor his disciples ever considered the doctrines of Church-authority, and Succession, and Conformity, as *vain words* and *idle dreams*, as our Socinians have done of late years; and after what hath been said, their views want no explanation.

5. In our behaviour toward those who have departed from us, let not us, who honour the Church, fall into the error of those who despise it. Let us not betray any symptoms of pride in censuring with severity, but rather, with hearts full of sorrow and compassion, lament the differences and divisions which expose the Christian religion to the scorn of its enemies. Infidels are delighted to see that Christians cannot understand one another; for thence they are ready to report, that there is no sense amongst them all, nor any reason in their religion; for that, if there were, they would agree about it. In this also the Papists triumph; they boast of their advantage over the Reformed, in that they are preserved in peace and unity*, while we are torn to pieces with factions and divisions.

Hence

* But see Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History: where he proves by incontrovertible evidence, that the Romish Church has not always maintained her boasted unanimity.

Hence they reflect upon the whole Reformation, as a natural source of confusion ; that they belong to *Jerasalem*, and we to *Babel*; that when we leave their Church, the city upon the hill, we never know where to stop, till we get to the bottom: that is, till we have run either into the madness of enthusiasm, or the profaneness of infidelity. How shall we stop this wide mouth of scandal, while appearances are so much against us? However, this reproach doth not reach us of the Church of England; who, in doctrine and profession, are where we were two hundred years ago. Let those who have left us try if they can answer the Papists upon this head: it is their business to account for the confusion which they only have introduced*.

If the Clergy of this Church have any desire to preserve it, they must consider for what end the Church is appointed. A Christian Church is a candlestick, to hold forth the Light of the Gospel. When it ceases to answer that end, it is

* It is too much the fashion of the times to divide the Christian Religion only into two classes, one including the Papists, and the other comprehending the motley herd who are disunited from the Church of Rome, and who are all distinguished by the general name of Protestants.—Whereas the Sectarians are many of them as widely removed from us of the Church of England, as we are from the Papists. .

is of no use as a Church; and the world may do as well without it. Great things have been attributed of late times to moral preaching: but there is no such thing as telling people what they are to *do*, without telling them what they are to *believe*; because the *Christian morality* is built upon the *Christian faith*, and is totally different from the morality of Heathens. *Deism*, so called, is a *Religion without Christianity*; it has neither the Father, the Son, nor the Holy Ghost, into whose name Christians are baptized. It has no Sacraments, no Redemption, no Atonement, no Church Communion, and consequently no Charity; for Charity is the love and unity of Christians as such. *Natural Religion* is but another name for *Deism*; it is the same thing in all respects; and I may challenge all the philosophers in Europe to shew the difference. Therefore to recommend moral duties on the ground of natural religion, is to preach *Deism* from a pulpit: and we should ask ourselves, whether God, who upholds his Church, to declare salvation by Jesus Christ alone, will preserve a Church, when it has left the Gospel, and holds forth the light of *Deism* in the candlestick which was made, and is supported in the world, only to hold forth the light of *Christianity*? What else is it that hath made way
for

for the enthusiastic rant of the Tabernacle? When the wise forsake the Gospel, then is the time for the unwise to take it up; but with such a mixture of error and indiscretion, as gives the world a pretence for never returning to it any more: and then the case is desperate.

‘*Deism*, properly so called,’ (said a certain writer) ‘is the *religion essential to man*, the *true original religion of reason and nature*.—
 ‘It is in *Deism*, properly so called, that our more discerning and rational *divines* have constantly placed the *alone excellency* and true glory of the *Christian* institution——*The Gospel* (says Dr. Sherlock) *was a republication of the Law of Nature*, and its precepts declarative of that original religion, which was as old as the creation.—If natural religion (says Mr. Chandler) be not a part of the religion of Christ, ’tis scarce worth while to enquire at all, what his religion is: from whence it seems very natural to infer, that the other parts of the religion of Christ are scarce worth any thing at all of our notice.’ [Deism fairly stated by a moral Philosopher: p. 5, 6, 7.] See the whole book, which proceeds on this principle; that natural religion being admitted, it must be a perfect scheme, a compleat structure; and that Christianity, as
 a super-

a superstructure, is unnecessary: and it is lamentable to see what advantage this author takes of the unguarded concessions of some celebrated Christian preachers and controversialists of the Church of England, who did not foresee, or did not consider, the consequences of their doctrines.

Dr. Taylor, some time since a dissenting teacher at *Norwich*, a man of considerable learning, was the author of certain Theological Lectures, which I have reason to think have met with a more favourable reception than they deserved among some of the Clergy of our own Church, and have been even recommended as elementary tracts to young Students in Divinity. In the first chapter of these Lectures, I find a rule of interpretation repugnant to the rule given us by the Scripture itself, which directs us to *compare spiritual things with spiritual*, that is, to compare the Scripture with the Scripture, that we may keep to the true sense of it. But here it is laid down as a fundamental rule, that we should always interpret the Scripture, in a *sense consistent with the laws of natural religion*; for that the *law of nature, as it is founded in the unchangeable nature of things, must be the basis and groundwork of every constitution of religion which God hath erected*. This

rule of Dr. Taylor prejudices the Scripture before we come to it, and inculcates into inexperienced Students of Divinity the very principle that hath ruined us, and given us up as a prey to the Deists; it allows them the advantage they have contended for against the peculiar doctrines of Revelation, as *scarce worth any thing at all of our notice, in comparison of natural religion*. For here, I say, before we descend to the Scripture, we are possessed of a system, founded in the unchangeable nature of things; from which, whatsoever the bible may seem to reveal, we are never to depart. Let us then suppose, that our Christian baptism teaches us to believe in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: what have we to do? Natural Religion hath already determined, from *the unchangeable nature of things*, that God is but *one person**. Therefore we must *interpret* the form of Baptism to *such a sense*, as will still leave this doctrine of *nature* in possession; either by teaching that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are, in reality, but *one person*; or that Jesus Christ is no person in the Godhead, but a *mere man, like ourselves*; or, that

* "This (says Dr. Clarke) is the *first principle of Natural Religion*." See Mr. Jones's *Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity*; p. 15, of the sixth Edition; where this is considered more at large.

that Christianity is not true, &c. So in like manner, by another anticipation, natural religion makes every man his own Priest and his own Temple: therefore it cannot possibly admit the true and proper Priesthood of Jesus Christ; but must reject the whole doctrine of atonement, and the corruption of man's nature; for this is incompatible with the idea of a natural religion; inasmuch as corrupt nature must produce a corrupt religion. If we say that nature is not corrupt, we overturn the foundations of the Gospel; which teaches us, that *the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them.*—Man, it seems, is so far from *knowing* the spiritual things revealed to him in the Scripture, that, as he now is *by nature*, he is not in a condition to *receive* them (they will be *foolishness* to him) till he is enabled so to do by a new faculty of *discernment*, which is supernatural and *spiritual*. It is therefore easy to foresee what must be the consequence, when Dr. Taylor's rule is admitted; and the younger Clergy of this Church take him for their guide. They will take the doctrines of nature, and work them up with the doctrines of the Scripture: that is, they will throw natural Religion into the Scripture, as Aaron threw the gold of
H H 2
Egypt

Egypt into the fire: and, what will *come out*? Not the Christian Religion, but the philosophical *calf* of *Socinus*.

Mr. *Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity* may be read with safety, by those who are already well learned in the Scripture: but what a perilous situation must that poor young man be in, who, perhaps, when he can but just construe the Greek Testament, or before, is turned over to be handled and tutored by this renowned veteran; who, with a shew of *reasonableness*, and some occasional sneers at orthodoxy, and affecting the piety and power of inspiration itself, has partly overlooked, and partly explained away, the first and greatest principles of Christianity, and reduced it to a single proposition, consistent with Heresy, Schism, Arianism, Socinianism, and Quakerism,

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE ABUSE OF THE REFORMATION, &c.

TO the *doctrines* which are pleaded in defence of separation, I might have added the use which has been made of the *historical event* of our Reformation from the errors of the Church of Rome. Here the Dissenters are in confederacy with the Papists against us. The Papists object, that by the *fact* of our separation from their Church, the *principle* of separation is admitted; and being once admitted, it will multiply sects and divisions amongst us, and justify them all, as much as it justifies us. This is the very argument, which the Dissenters have repeated an hundred times; and they borrowed it originally from Rome, whose emissaries were

detected among the Puritans in the days of Elizabeth, feeding them with reasons and objections for the multiplying of schism, and the weakening of the Episcopal Church of England; and God knows, they succeeded but too well. However, the link which unites these two parties may easily be broken. They both agree, that the Reformation of the Church of England was a *separation from* the Church of Rome, of the same kind, and on the same principles, with the separation of our Dissenters. But to say this, is to assert, that the Pope had a *legal* authority over the Church of England; when in fact it was an usurped authority; and the Church of England reformed itself, as a national Episcopal Church, on the ground of its original independence on the See of Rome. Therefore, till our Sectaries have given up this point to the Papists, and made the Church of England legally dependent on the authority of Rome, the case of our Reformation affords no precedent to their separation. This Bishop *Hoadley* knew; therefore he allowed the authority of the Church of Rome, and made the Reformation of this Church a forcible separation, or schism, that all the Sectaries might be justified by our example. But he goes to a greater length: he maintains, that we did not reform, because

because the doctrines of the Church of Rome *were actually corrupt*, but because we *thought them so*; putting our Reformation on the foot of *opinion*, not of reasonable right, and actual knowledge: and opinion being once admitted as a rule of Reformation, will hold as good against us, as against the Papists: nay, it will stop no where, till it make every man a Church to himself; with such doctrines as he likes, and without any one Christian ordinance whatsoever. When we descend to reason and authority, a weak cause may soon be overthrown; but if *opinion* is to justify, the Quakers may stand their ground; and so may Socinians, Mahometans, Jews, and Heathens; because the opinions of men, from the force of custom and habit, will go with the persuasion in which they have been educated. The Papists wish to put all Reformation from their Church, on such a foot, that the principle may be ruined by its own absurdity: and in this our Sectaries, with Bishop *Hoadley* for their advocate, have given them all the advantage they can desire.

Popular power is another engine which hath been turned against the Church; that is, against the authority of God and his ministers; and if this is admitted, then must that be right which the people set up, whatever it may be. All

unlawful authority affects to ride in upon the backs of the people: and the patriots of Pagan Rome, while they trampled upon captive kings, and looked upon all nations as made to be their slaves, were always flattering the *people* of their own commonwealth, with the conceit of their own *majesty*. The *Geneva*-discipline went upon this principle; and they were followed therein by our Puritans and Independents. But the Scripture is so expressly against it, that its friends were tempted to corrupt the text of the New Testament, to give it countenance. In the History of the Ordaining of the seven Deacons, in the sixth chapter of the Acts, the text says—*whom WE may appoint over this business*—giving the appointment to the *Apostles*. But the words were altered into—*whom YE may appoint*—giving the appointment to the *people*. One of the largest and the most numerous folio editions of the bible ever printed in this country, which is that of *Field* 1660, several copies of which are still to be seen, upon the reading desks in our Churches, has this corruption; as many others had from the years 1640 to 1660. *Field's* edition was worked off in the time of the Usurpation, and was to have been published under the authority of the Parliament; but not coming forth till after the Restoration,

storation, the title page was changed, and it made its appearance *cum Privilegio*.

From this falsification of the Apostolical History, it is easy to foresee (and every young reader should be aware of it) how the English History, particularly that of the last century, must have suffered under the hands of the same party; what falsities and forgeries must have been propagated, to conceal the truth, to defame and blacken the best characters, and to justify the worst. Sometimes these bold experiments brought the authors of them into great embarrassment. Mr. Baxter, in two editions of his *Saint's Everlasting Rest*, printed before the year 1660, instead of the *Kingdom of Heaven*, as it is in the Scripture, calls it the *Parliament of Heaven*, (and, if like their own, it must have been a parliament *without a King*), and into this Parliament he puts some of the *regicides*, and other like *saints*, who were then dead. But in the editions after the Restoration, he drops them all out of Heaven again, and restores the kingdom of God to its place, in the language of the Gospel. Lord Brook was one of the saints whom Baxter thus dis-canonized: of whose remarkable end Lord Clarendon gives an account; vol. 11. chap. vi. p. 114.

But

But to return to the subject of popular Election. I have an author before me, a declaimer against *Priestcraft*, who finds the right of the people in the History of the Election of *Matthias* to the Apostleship. "*Matthias is elected,*" says he, "*to testify that ordination might be valid by the votes of the people only, without the immediate interposition of Heaven.*" He calls the Assembly of Apostles and Disciples, who were an hundred and twenty in number, *the people*; of whom we know that *eleven* were Apostles; that *seventy* more were ordained ministers; and nothing appears, but that (the *women* excepted) all the rest of this assembly were of the ministry likewise. But supposing them to be *the people*, how does it appear, that ordination was valid by their *votes*? Where is the account of this voting? The election is referred to God in the determination of a lot.—*Thou, Lord, shew whither of these two thou hast chosen.* Here the immediate interposition of Heaven is applied for; but our orator says, this ordination was from the votes of the people only, without any such interposition of Heaven*. These two examples may be sufficient to shew the wretched shifts, and bold experiments,

* See the *Axe laid to the Root of Priestcraft*, in four Discourses. Disc. iv. p. 5.

ments, to which men are driven in the handling of the Scripture, to uphold the Anti-christian doctrine of a Church, derived from the authority of the people.

A
SHORT VIEW
OF THE PRESENT STATE
OF THE
A R G U M E N T
BETWEEN THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND
AND THE
DISSENTERS.



A

SHORT VIEW, &c.

THE excellent *Hooker*, in the Preface to his *Ecclesiastical Polity*, gives us a curious and clear account of the zeal and artifice with which the first Puritans maintained and recommended their schism against the Church of England.— But every member of this Church should see, within as short a compass as may be, how the same cause (allowing for the difference of times and fashions) is maintained now.

A worthy Divine distinguished himself some thirty years ago, in *Three Letters to a Gentleman dissenting from the Church of England*; which Letters were much attended to at the time, and
procured

procured the author the notice and encouragement of Archbishop *Secker*. He afterwards reduced the substance of them into a small manual, addressed to a *dissenting parishioner*, with the pious desire of *guiding him to the Church of England*: and an excellent little piece it is. But as the zeal of our Dissenters permits nothing of this kind to pass, without the appearance of an answer, it is probable they set one of their best hands upon the work of writing a short *reply* to it; that the dissenting parishioner might *not* be guided to the Church of England. This *reply*, which was printed at *Birmingham*, (that modern mint of base money, and false doctrine) I have, with some difficulty, procured; and I shall produce, in their order, such arguments as I have found in it; from which it will be seen, how the Dissenters of the present age defend their separation.

1. They make very light of the sin of *schism*, as a thing which has nothing frightful to *wise* people; although it be dressed up by us in a frightful form, to terrify the *ignorant*, and such as are *children in understanding*.

Such is *schism*, when it is committed against *us*; but when it comes home to *themselves*, they have entertained a very different opinion of it, and have carried the principle of unity as high
as

as the most zealous of the Church of England. Liberty of conscience, when it operated against themselves, was called, *cursed Toleration*; that *hideous monster of Toleration*, in a book subscribed by the ministers of the province of London, Dec. 14, 1647*. We are then agreed, that schism must be of pernicious consequence, and that it is a grievous affliction to the Christian society; though we are not rightly agreed as to the objects of schism. If considered in itself, it is the opposite to St. Paul's virtue of *charity*; as any intelligent person may see, who reads the 13th chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians as a continuation of the 12th chapter. And if charity is the greatest of all virtues, its contrary, which is schism, must be the greatest of all sins; therefore we justly pray against it in the Litany. Whether the Dissenters ever follow our example, is more than I know; though it can scarcely be expect-

VOL. IV.

II

ed

* See a friendly debate between a Conformist and a Non-conformist. Edit. 3, p. 76. That the Dissenters are, to this day, of the same *intolerant spirit*, is not to be doubted; and I have had repeated demonstrations of it under my own eye, who have seen a small minority of dissenters, though unprovoked, stir up such a furious opposition against a Church, and its minister, that a good man, of a peaceable temper, made this reflexion upon it to his clergyman:—'Sir, I perceive we should not have so much as a barn to worship God in, if they could prevent it.'

ed that they should pray against, while they continue in it, and think it hath nothing frightful to *wise* people. But if we may judge of it by its fruits (and there is no better rule), what envy and hatred, what disputings and railings, what cruelty and persecution, what rebellion and sacrilege, hath it not produced in this kingdom? and they who acted these things were so far from taking shame to themselves, that they laid all the guilt of them upon the Church, which they persecuted and plundered! We should be glad to forget these things, but that there are some amongst us who delight in the memory of those unhappy times, and chew all the murder and the mischief of them over again, which is the case with the author of the *Confessional*, and other writers of the same spirit. As to the corruption of doctrine, which follows upon schism, it was so apparent to the actors in the schism of the last century, that it forced from them that testimony above mentioned, against the *cursed* nature of *Toleration*. Three-score different sects, some holding monstrous and blasphemous opinions, rose out of the Presbyterians of that time. Now, to make light of all these things, as if schism, which is a root of bitterness, *i. e.* an active principle of mischief in the mind, were but a slight offence, a mere
scarecrow

scarecrow to *wise* people, is to deceive men, and bring their consciences and souls into a fatal snare. Nay, it is not only to deceive them, simply, but with the very deception which brought death into the world. The tempter suggested to our first parents, that they *should not surely die*; and that their apprehensions of danger arose from the *ignorance* and *childishness* of their *understandings*.

2. They plead next, that their schism, with respect to the Church of England, is no more than a separation from an *human establishment*; for that the Church of England has *no foundation* but upon the *King and the Parliament*; whereas the Church of Christ is *founded upon the doctrines* taught by the Apostles.

If our Church has *no foundation but upon the King and Parliament*, then certainly it is not founded upon the authority of Christ, and consequently it is no Church of Christ. But will any man say, that a national Church, being a member of the Catholic Church of Christ, ceases to be such, when adopted as a part of the constitution, and established by the civil power? Suppose it were persecuted by the civil power; and its ministers and worship were proscribed; would it therefore cease to be a Church of Christ? Certainly not: for the

Church of the Hebrews in Egypt, was still the Church of God, though the people were under a cruel edict not to serve him, and God owned it as such, and delivered it at last. Do the powers of this world unmake the Church by their reception of it, when they do not by their persecuting of it? Do its bishops and priests cease to be bishops and priests? Do its sacraments cease to be sacraments? Doth its discipline cease to be Christian discipline, and love its authority, because the state admits of it, and establishes it? I say, suppose they were to declare against all these things, as the Heathens and Jews did in the first ages of the Gospel, their declaration would signify nothing: because the Church, in its priesthood and sacraments, derives its authority only from Jesus Christ, which the persecution of the civil powers cannot reach; much less can their allowance turn it into an *human* authority, and render it of none effect. But we shall see hereafter, how all this is overthrown, by another plea which the Dissenters (forgetting *this*) have made use of to defend their separation from the Church of England.

To say, that the Church of Christ is founded upon the *doctrines* taught by the Apostles, is a gross mistake. *Doctrines* can no more confer
authority

authority of office to Church ministers, than the statute book in England can make a justice of the peace; whose power must come to him by personal deputation. A written law does nothing, till there comes an executive power, lawfully ordained, to administer and bring it to effect. Let any Dissenter shew us the text or doctrine that will make a priest. We can soon shew him one which tells us how priests must be made.—*No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron*; who was called by an outward consecration, from a person whom God had commissioned to consecrate: and the power thus given descended by succession to his posterity. The power of *absolution* was given by Christ to the Christian ministry, and without this power there can be no such thing as a Church of Christ. The priesthood had the power of *absolution* under the law of Moses; and even the priests of heathenism were never considered as the representatives of the people, but of the God to whom they belong; to pronounce blessings and forgive sins in his name. But the Presbyterians are so far from claiming this power to themselves (though supposed to be in all the priests of the world), that they mock at in us, and call it Popery and juggling; and a Church

so rejecting a power essential to the nature of priesthood, is in a state of abjuration against its own existence.

3. They say, the Church of England hath imposed such articles of faith, as the Gospel hath not imposed; for which imposition Christ hath given no authority.

This objection extends to every Church upon earth, that requires any articles of faith, as terms of Church communion; and it proves too much if it proves any thing. The gospel, it is true, imposes nothing but *baptism*, and its *faith in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*: all other articles are intended for the defence and security of this one in its proper extent. And such articles will be more or less, according to times and occasions, as the adversaries of the faith assault it on different sides, and with different principles of offence. The Gospel does not require that we should renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil; nor set down the Apostles' creed, as a condition of communion: and, if we had a mind to be perverse and captious, we might argue, that a man may come to a christian baptism with his mouth shut, and not say one word for himself, because the Gospel hath not set down the form, nor specified the terms of the baptismal covenant;
though

though the intention or sense of it (what we are to renounce, and what we are to believe) is clear throughout the New Testament. The Church of England hath articles expressly against Popery : but the Gospel hath imposed no such articles ; it knew nothing of Popery ; and the principle of the Dissenters would leave us defenceless against the Papists, as well as all our other enemies, and is contrary to the fundamental principle of all society, and even of nature itself. We have no occasion here to enquire what the articles of the Church of England are ; because the objection extends to all articles whatsoever, except such as are set down in the scripture, which sets down nothing but baptism ; and is so brief in its accounts, that every true principle of the christian faith might be evaded, if we were to lay hold of some short expressions, and make them *exclusive*, contrary to common rules of reasoning, the plainest facts, and the nature of the case, as some have done ; particularly the celebrated Mr. *Locke*, who contends, that the Christian Gospel has but one article, namely, *that Jesus Christ is the Messiah* ; whereas the one great condition of salvation, in the Gospel, is baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; therefore the great and fundamental article of

the Gospel, is that of faith in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

4. From the preceding article, which asserts that the Church of England hath imposed articles which Christ hath not imposed; it is argued, that in opposing the Church of England, they oppose *an invasion of the kingly authority of Jesus Christ*.

Jesus Christ doth not act in person, but hath commissioned his Church to act for him, and hath promised to be with it, and support its authority, to the end of the world. Therefore, to argue *for* Jesus Christ *against* his Church, is to set up Jesus Christ against himself; and the like objection may be made against all the Churches in the world: which, so far as they act for their own just rights, *under* Jesus Christ, may be said to act *against* him. Every true Church is bound to assert and defend the faith it hath received: but its enemies will call this necessary defence an *imposition*, and then contend, that they are free from all obligation. But with what grace doth this argument come from the party, who imposed their own *solemn league and covenant* on men's consciences in this kingdom, at the peril of their lives and fortunes, and proscribed them as *malignants* if they refused to take it; for which there certainly is
neither

neither precedent nor precept in the Gospel? How marvellously do the opinions of men change, when they argue *for themselves*, and when they argue *against us*!

5. To explain away the offence of schism, it is farther argued, that as there were *schisms* among the *Corinthians*, when it does not appear that there was any *separation*; so there may be a separation where there is no schism: because Christians may still be *united in heart and affection*, though they perform the offices of religion in different places and in different ways.

The history of facts in this country gives us a different prospect of things, and indeed it is preposterous to suppose, that if we sow in schism, we shall reap in unity: or, in other words, that if we murder and mangle the body of the Church, we shall preserve charity, which is the life and soul of it. It is true, we shall not dispute much about any thing, if we are *indifferent* to every thing: but misguided religious zeal is not of this insipid character. The ordinance of Parliament of the 11th of August, 1645, for *putting in execution the directory*, has these words:—"If any person or persons whatsoever shall, at any time or times hereafter, use, or cause the aforesaid book of Com-
mon

mon Prayer to be used in any church, chapel, or public place of worship, or in any private place, or family, within the kingdom of England, or the dominion of Wales, or port and town of Berwick: every person so offending herein, shall, for the first offence, pay the sum of five pounds of lawful English money; for the second offence, ten pounds; and for the third, shall suffer one whole year's imprisonment, without bail or mainprize." This law was one of the fruits of schism; and there never was a law more severe and cruel. The king was then living, and the *private* worship of his family is not excepted. But these were days of religious madness; we know better now. So it is said; but I fear with very little truth. What would not that persecuting spirit do, if it had power, which is so conspicuous in the *Syllabus* of Mr. Robinson's Lectures, a *dissenting teacher* at Cambridge? How fresh is the remembrance (or ought to be) of the riots in London, which shook the kingdom, and brought us so nearly to ruin in a few days: all conducted by a fanatic Presbyterian, with a rout of forty thousand disorderly people at his heels? And if the principles of fanaticism can perform such wonders here, even in a man without learning, without parts, without morals, without

without sense: how dreadful may their effects be upon a future occasion! and who can tell how *soon* that occasion may happen? especially as Dr. *Priestley*, another *dissenting teacher*, is now threatening us with impending ruin, from himself and his party; who give us warning, that they have long been, and are now, *conveying gunpowder under our foundation, to blow up the old rotten fabric of the Church of England?* Neither is that zeal totally departed which produced the cruel edict of 1645, against the use of our liturgy; a Dissenter (to my knowledge) having been lately heard to declare, that every *Common Prayer Book in England ought to be burned!* and this was from a person, who, abstracted from these paroxysms of religious bigotry, was of a peaceable and quiet temper! Add to this, that practice, which is almost universal with the Dissenters, of *forcing* their servants and dependants into the *worship of the Meeting-house*, however strong their affections may be to the worship of the Church by birth and education. But our dissenting apologist assures us, Christians may still be *united in heart and affection*, though they worship God in different places: and that there may be separation without schism, as there was schism at Corinth without separation.

tion. But these smaller schisms of the Corinthians, which did not actually separate them into different communions, were yet, according to the Apostle, very reprehensible, and of bad tendency: therefore, actual separation, being schism in the extreme, must be more reprehensible. To suppose it less, is to contradict the reason of things; as if it should be argued, that because we may hurt a man without killing him, therefore we may kill a man without hurting him.

6. However, if there should be any schism betwixt the Church of England and the Dissenters, they say the *guilt* of it is with the Church, who will not *yield to weak brethren in things which are confessed to be indifferent and of small moment*.

With what propriety can things of *small moment* be introduced, as objections to our communion, after it has been asserted, that the Church of England is *no Church of Christ*? If that objection be good, all things of *small moment* are superfluous. For who can be obliged, or who indeed will consent, to be a member of a Church, which is no Church of Christ? "Leave things indifferent (saith this reply) as they are in their own nature, and as Christ hath left them, and the separation is over."

over." So then, if these indifferent things were removed, the Dissenters would communicate with a Church, which is no Church of Christ! Who can believe this? Is it not much more probable, that the Dissenters do not mean to throw up the separation for any concessions that can be made by a Church, which, in their opinion, is itself separated from the Communion of Jesus Christ? These objections are so inconsistent, that they leave small hopes of the possibility of a reconciliation. For if all these small things were removed, still there will remain the insuperable (and we trust, uncharitable and groundless) objection, that the Church of England is no Church of Christ: and that Dissenters cannot upon any principle communicate with a Church, which they think to be excommunicate. The case between us is very bad under this representation of it; but it becomes, if possible, more hopeless in what follows.

7. For the reply tells us, that the Dissenters do not stand out for the *value* of the things required, which are matters of *indifference*; but stand up in defence of that *liberty*, wherewith Christ hath made them free, and will not be brought into bondage.

Do they think then, that Christ hath given
them

them *liberty* to break the peace of the Church, for matters *indifferent*? That is, to destroy peace, essential to salvation; to save liberty, the creature of human pride? Another apologist of the Dissenters, the author of *The Independent Whig*, puts this matter out of question; and affirms without reserve, that *schism* is so necessary to the preservation of *liberty*, that there can be *no liberty without schism*. What would the Christian world be, if this principle were universally followed? No two of us could consent together; because the one must lose his *liberty*, till he goes off into *schism*; so it would break all Christian societies into individuals. *Liberty* and *bondage* are words of strange significations in this land, which it would be tedious to display. Only let us distinguish, that there is no bondage in dutiful submission; for that is the *service of God* which is *perfect freedom*: nor any liberty in unreasonable disobedience; for that is the bondage of Satan, who works in the children of disobedience, and puts them to a great deal of trouble; making them restless and impatient, and leading them such a wearisome life, that if it were not called liberty, they would wish themselves out of the world.

8. The Church of England is accused of taking away the Bread and the Cup, unless people

people will receive kneeling; and Christ hath not made kneeling a necessary term of Communion.

Nor is it necessary with us; because we administer the Sacrament to the sick or the infirm, either sitting, kneeling, or lying. Kneeling is proper to an act of devotion; such the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is now, and not a social act of eating, as at the Passover, when it was first instituted. Kneeling may admit of a bad construction, because the Papists kneel and worship the Host: but Charity will give it a good construction, and then all the difficulty is over. However, let us call it an *imposition*: yet why should the enjoying of it be objected to by the very people, who imposed on all that took their solemn league and covenant the posture of *standing*, with the ceremony of *lifting up the right hand bare*? But, what is still more to the purpose, one of their apologists assures us, they make no scruple of giving their Sacrament to all those who chuse to kneel in a Meeting-house*. Therefore it is not the *thing*,
(though

* " In some of our Churches, there are some who receive *standing*, some *kneeling*.—Nor is there, I believe, amongst our ministers, one in five hundred, who would refuse to give the Sacrament either standing or kneeling, to any one who thought either of these the fittest posture of receiving." *Dissenting Gentlemen's Answer to the Rev. Mr. White's Three Letters.* P. 21.

(though that is sometimes highly exclaimed against) but the *enjoining* of the thing that renders it offensive : and it appears from this case, that Dissenters will do that to please themselves which they will not do to please God ; who hath enjoined us all to be at peace with one another, and to agree in his worship.

Sponsors in Baptism, and the signature of the Cross, are objected to. But the first is only a prudent provision, as a farther security for the child, if the parents should die, or be of such characters as renders them unfit for sponsors ; which the child cannot help. The signature of the Cross can give no offence (as one should think) to any person who delights in the memory of the Cross itself. The purest ages of the Church used it on all occasions, particularly in exorcisms, which were antiently a part of Baptism, and there are some pretty clear intimations in the Scripture for the use of some signature on the forehead ; and the first of all signatures is that of the Cross. For motives of worldly traffic, the Dutch, instead of preferring it to a place in their foreheads ; trample it under their feet : and our Dissenters reject it from an affection to their schism. If the Papists are superabundant and superstitious in the use of the Cross, what is that to us ? If they repeat the
Lord's

Lord's Prayer twenty times in an hour, are we not to repeat it all*?

9. It is farther objected to our Church, that the people have a right, an *unalienable* right, to chuse their own ministers; which with us they are not permitted to do.

As for the patriotic term *unalienable*, it is applied to the rights of *nature*, which are *unalienable* because they are *inherent*. But here, it can only mean, that the Dissenters claim it. and are resolved not to part with it. On this part of the subject, I must lament with tears in my eyes, the great abuses in the Church of England, in respect to patronage and admission into Church-livings. But in bad times, no regulations are sufficient to secure us from corruption; and even the very means appointed to *keep out* bad men, will *let them in*: for there are times, when persons of no conscience or character may act *with impunity*; and the worst of men are the most ready to play with all religious securities. That this case would be mended if the choice of ministers were always with the people, is by no means clear. For nothing is so common as for people to be divided in interests and affec-

VOL. IV.

K K

tions

* See the use of the Signature of the Cross in Baptism, fully and learnedly vindicated in *Bennet's* Abridgment of the *London Cases*, chap. vi.

tions on very unworthy motives; and thence many great and scandalous disturbances arise; and a parish is so divided into parties, that perhaps they do not come into humour again for some years. Besides; suppose a *Socinian* should have got possession of a pulpit, and preached the people (or a few of the most active, noisy, and cunning, who overbear all the rest) into heresy: whom would they chuse, but a Socinian, at the next vacancy? And would it not be much better that an Orthodox minister should be put upon them? If the people have this right, then all the people have it; and consequently a Socinian congregation have a right to chuse a Socinian minister. How the Scripture hath been handled, as to this affair of popular election, was noted in the Postscript to the *Essay on the Church*.

19. Though the Dissenters have no ministry by *Succession*, they make light of this defect, and think they are as well off as we are, because they say, our *right of ordaining came down to us through the channel of Popery*.

Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, in a Church, were no invention of Popery, nor is our succession any more affected by Popery, than the Apostles' Creed, which is also *come down to us through the channel of Popery*; and so is Canon.

of

of the Scripture itself: yet we take the old Creed and the old Scriptures, and think them as good as ever. The Church of Rome is under such an opprobrium with Protestants, that it is a convenient bugbear, brought forward upon all occasions by those who want better argument, to frighten us out of our Church principles, and cover the weakness of their own innovations. But the succession of Church offices is no more affected by the errors of Popery, than a man's pedigree is affected by his bodily distemper, or the distempers of his patents; and if the man, by alteratives and restoratives, is cured with the blessing of God, he returns to the state of his purer ancestors of a remote generation. A self-originated upstart, who has been railing at him for things past, in which he had no share, may take his name, and claim his inheritance; but when his title comes to be examined, the true right will appear, and justice will take place.

If we trace the pedigree of the Church of England far enough backwards, we find a Christian Church of the Episcopal form in Britain, with an independent right and authority of its own, before *Austin* set his foot in the country, as the messenger of *Rome*. At the Reformation, this Church did but return to its

original rights, with an Episcopacy independent of the Pope, and enjoyed it for some years, with the general approbation of the people, and there was no such thing as a Presbyterian in the nation. It was approved and congratulated for its felicity by the reformed of other countries: and even *Calvin* and *Beza* then little thought that they should have any followers so *mad*, (I use their own word) as to reject such an Episcopacy as ours, which had freed itself from the usurpation of the Papacy. *Calvin*, in his Epistle to Cardinal *Sadolet*, said of those who should reject such an hierarchy, that he should think them, *nullo non anathemate dignos*, i. e. “that no curse could be too bad for them.” *Beza* would not believe that any could reject the order of Bishops in a reformed Church. *If there be such*, said he, *God forbid that any man in his wits should assent to the madness of those men* *. And in the same Book †, speaking of the hierarchy of England and her Bishops, he says, *Let her enjoy that singular blessing of God, which I wish may be perpetual to her*. Such at that time were the sentiments of *Beza* and *Calvin*; who afterwards found it

* *Ad Tract. de Minist. Evang. ab Hadr. Sarav. Edit. Belg. c. i.*

† Chap. 18.

it convenient to change their style ; and, when the war was carried on against Episcopacy itself, the expurgatorial authority of their editors in later editions expunged these charitable attestations out of their works; which hath a very guilty appearance.

11. The Dissenters plead, that what is called the Act of Toleration, has given a sanction to their separation, and taken away the sin of it. They are “ not chargeable with schism, since they who have the *power of continuing or altering our Church at their pleasure*, have *given them liberty to withdraw*, and have taken their places of worship *under their protection* as well as ours.”

If I understand this plea right, it is a mill-stone about the neck of all the rest ; because it shews, that the apologist of the Dissenters hath argued without principles, and so hath fallen into a manifest contradiction. He began with mocking at the Church of England, as having no *foundation* but upon *the King and Parliament* : or, as another Dissenter hath expressed it, in the like insulting strain, as “ *built upon the foundation of the Lords and Commons, the King himself being the chief corner stone.*” And they have argued, that it even ceases to be a Church, of Christ, because it acts under the allow-

ance of the civil power. Yet in their own case, the King and Parliament, by an act of grace, can make schism to be no schism! The protection we have from the civil government is cast in our teeth, as a disadvantage, which extends even to the *unchurching* of us, and throwing us out of the kingdom of Christ; but the same thing (supposing them to have it) takes away from them the guilt of their separation! And thus they give to the King and Parliament, the privilege of God himself, who only can forgive sin: which is more than we ever allowed them.

It is a very false suggestion, that our civil government can alter the Church *at their pleasure*. There is, indeed, a sense, in which it may be said, that a man has *power* to do whatever he can do by *force* and violence; but still there is an essential difference between the power of force and the power of *right* and *authority*. The Church of England never can be altered *legally*, without the consent and act of the *Convocation*, who are a part of the constitution: and if it were otherwise done, it must be done by an act of violence, against the rights of Englishmen, for Englishmen do not lose their rights by being Christians and Churchmen; as their enemies are inclined to have it. There
can

can be no power of authority in laymen to make or unmake a Church, any more than there can be a power in the Church to make or unmake the civil constitution; and nothing can confound these powers but an overbearing principle of infidelity; from which may God deliver us; who hath promised that the gates of Hell (the judicial power of the adversaries of Jesus Christ) shall not prevail against us. Suppose the civil power should make an act, that the King shall ordain priests, or that priests shall not baptize children, nor consecrate the sacrament, what would such an act signify? Therefore, they have not the power to alter the Church *at their pleasure*; for this might be their pleasure, if their wits, or the grace of God were to forsake them. Such a power, if it were claimed, was never exercised even by Heathen persecutors. However, the Dissenters do not seem unwilling that such a tyrannical power should be exercised, and appear to relish the idea of it, if it be but turned against the Church of England. No one *spiritual* act can be exercised, nor is it claimed by the civil power in this country; which can neither baptize, nor ordain, nor absolve, nor consecrate, nor excommunicate; although the Dissenters, in the heat of their zeal, have given the state a

spiritual power, and even more, over us and themselves too. But the state can say, who shall or shall not partake of temporalities: and this very state will say, some more, some less, as long as the Church accepts of their protection, and enjoys a legal maintenance and support under them. Worldly politics in such a case will be sure to interfere, and abuses will arise. Churchmen will be apt to accommodate themselves to the views and inclinations of the state, or some of the acting members of the state, who are their friends; their doctrines will change with the times; their consciences will become too flexible and easy, and the people whom they teach will be in danger from them. There is no convenience in this world without its inconvenience. When the state was schismatical in the days of the grand usurpation, the Church of that time could find no such sin as *sacrilege* in the Scripture, for the fear of giving offence to their patrons, who were deep in the guilt of it: and the *Assembly of Divines* (as it was remarked long ago by Bishop *Patrick*) avoided all mention of it in their *Annotations*.

12. The Dissenters hold themselves blameless, because many persons of the Church of England, and some of great and popular character,

racter, have justified and even applauded their separation.

I find great stress laid upon this circumstance, which is blazoned out with pompous words and splendid quotations, as well of what hath been *spoken* (or so reported) as written. But the fear or favour of men, especially of men too attentive to the interests of this world (as some of their friends have certainly been) is a very unsound bottom for the Dissenters to rest upon: and so they esteem it themselves, when it is on our side. But if any false brethren amongst us take part with them, all such are *excellent men, ornaments of the establishment*, and of unanswerable authority. Sometimes the Dissenters are all for the Scripture; Jesus Christ is their only King; and to him they appeal for the rectitude of their proceedings: but if they find a flatterer amongst us, they make the most of him: and some such are always to be found; for all are not Israel that are of Israel; and it doth not follow, that a man must be true to the Church of England, because it hath introduced him to a seat in the House of Lords. Temporal considerations bring some men into the Church, whose hearts and affections never were, nor ever will be with it. Of such no honest man can approve; and therefore the approbation of
such,

such, with all their testimonies and certificates, is but of little value at last. Bishop *Hoadley* was of this character: a Socinian in principle: who, while he was celebrated by the enemies of the Church of England, (and perhaps assisted toward his advancement) for having banished all *Mitres* and *Lordships*, and *Spiritual Courts*, out of the *Kingdom of Christ*, was, himself, an answer to every thing he had written; who scrupled not to adorn himself with a *Mitre* and a *Lordship* in one of the first preferments in this Church; while he was a greater favourer of those who were out of it, than of those who were in it; unless they were in it upon his own principles.

Amongst other bright ornaments of the Church who applaud the separation of the Dissenters, the authors of the *Free and Candid Disquisitions* are brought in. These are not only tender to the Dissenters, but they rather think we shall never do well without them; that they are necessary to *preserve the virtue of the nation*; to *save our religious liberty*; to prevent the return of *slavery*; and to serve as a check, lest we should cast a *favourable aspect toward Rome*. These things are fairly said, but not truly; and if we consider a little farther from whence they came, little honour will accrue to the Dissenters
from

from the testimony of these authors. For it is by no means clear that they were *members of our own Church*, though they most solemnly and repeatedly professed themselves so to be in their work. It was suspected very early, that they were not such as they called themselves, but enemies under the disguise of friends. Of this their work itself carries some internal marks, which seem to have escaped them unawares.—*Ficta cito ad Naturam reciderint suam.* The author of *Free and Impartial Considerations on the Free and Candid Disquisitions*, pressed them with this (Anno 1751) and with great appearance of reason. He told them farther, “It begins now to be reported, and I partly believe it, that an eminent Dissenter, well known by his writings, has had a hand more or less in the *Disquisitions**.” But, some few years after, in 1758, when this secret had been searched a little farther, or had transpired of itself, I find an author, and, I believe, a very honest one, asserting in the plainest terms, that those authors were actually Dissenters; and taxing the party very roundly with their prevarication, in these words: “Amidst the greatest indulgence, and in open defiance of the laws, they impugned and libelled our Liturgy, and our Constitution, without

* Page 59.

without the least proof or foundation: they charged our Liturgy with all the defects, with all the faults, improprieties, and corruptions, which had been suggested by Papists, Heretics, Enthusiasts, and the most inveterate enemies of our constitution. And for fear the people should say, that an enemy had done this, they, by the most solemn and repeated insinuations, declared themselves to be *true and dutiful sons of the established Church* *." If, after such professions, these writers were Dissenters, their *Disquisitions* exhibit such a scene of treachery, prevarication, self-adulation, and ingratitude, to the government *under* which, and the established Church *with* which they live, as is scarcely to be paralleled in history.

On this supposition, all the fine things those authors thought fit to say of the Dissenters, and their virtues, and the nature and merits of their separation, are of no authority; for that Dissenters should praise Dissenters, is nothing wonderful; but, if Dissenters did this, under the name of *true and dutiful sons of the Church*, then such praise is against them in every word of it. What sort of principles they must be, which can reconcile men's consciences to such

Jesuitical

* Case of the Royal Martyr considered with candour,
P. 333, 334.

Jesuitical frauds and disguises, they who practise them are bound to consider.

If the Dissenters think they can justify their separation by the *praise of men*; let them proceed fairly, and take it, such as it is, *all together*. They should remember and estimate properly, how much of it comes from the bench of our Bishops, and how much from the seat of the scornful: how universally they are befriended and admired by Deists, Free-thinkers, Socinian Philosophers, and loose-livers; who delighting to see the Church opposed, and Christian people divided, are exactly of the same opinion with some of those great *ornaments of the establishment* of whose testimony our apologist hath so loudly boasted. "*I heartily thank God,*" says the author of *The Independent Whig*, "*that we have Dissenters, and I hope we shall never be without them* *."

13. The last and the most general argument on which the Dissenters depend; and which, if it were just, would render all other arguments superfluous, is this; that all men *have a right to judge and chuse for themselvss in matters of religion*.

This is an extensive principle, which justifies all sects, and supersedes all institutions and sacraments

* Vol. iii. p. 223.

sacraments whatsoever. It also shews the Dissenters of this day, who have recourse to it, to be quite a different class of men, from the *Puritans* in the days of *Elizabeth*; for here they extend their claims from schism up to heresy, and beyond it, even into the privileges and immunities of infidelity itself. The *Puritans* formerly judged against us in our discipline: but the Dissenters, and their friends, now judge against us in our doctrines. For, thus saith the author of the *Independent Whig*, another apologist of the Dissenters.—“No man ought to pay any submission to that doctrine or discipline which he *does not like*.” and the war, which was once carried on against *Prelacy* and *Ceremonies*, is now turned against *Articles* and *Creeds*.

If the Dissenters at large have this right of chusing what they *like*, and rejecting what they *dislike*: then the *Quakers* have it: and why not the *Jews* and the *Mahometans*? For, I desire to know, what there is betwixt us and them, but *matters of religion*.

As to this affair of *chusing*, especially in *matters of religion*, there are strange examples of human perverseness and wickedness. How often did the people *chuse new Gods*? *Heresy* is so called, because it is a doctrine which a
man

man doth not *receive* but *chuse* for himself; and if his choice is of *right*, there can be no such thing as heresy in the world. But *heresy* is reckoned among the *works of the flesh*; and they that *heap up teachers to themselves*, are said to do it *of their own lusts*. Thus every case becomes desperate: for *lust*, being an irrational, brutal principle, hears no reason; and nothing but disorder and confusion can follow, when this principle takes the lead in religion. When men *took wives of such as they chose*, and had no rule but this rule of choice; the earth was soon *filled with violence*: and if men may take what they chuse in religion, sects and divisions, strife and envying, rebellion and sacrilege, without end, must be the consequence: and so it is already recorded in the *annals of this kingdom*.

POSTSCRIPT.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST SEPARATION OF THE DISSENTERS FROM THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

THE preceding Short View of the Argument betwixt the Church and the Dissenters, having brought the authors of *Free and Candid Disquisitions on the Liturgy of the Church of England*, under our consideration; I cannot help mentioning on this occasion, that I have a manuscript in my possession of seventy-two sheets, containing Remarks on that work, written immediately after its publication, by one of the best scholars and best divines of this century.

The public never did, and probably never will, receive any information from these papers; but to me they have been very entertaining and instructive. In one of the author's notes upon a large quotation from the Epistles of St. *Cyprian*, I find the following account of the rise
and

and progress of the schism, which hath troubled the state of the Church, more or less, ever since the Reformation; and as this little work may fall into the hands of some readers, who never heard, whether our Dissenters originally divided *from us*, or *we from them*; it may be useful to shew how the case stands. The fact is this; they *went out from us*, after the full establishment of this Church.

‘For, in the year 1548, 2 Ed. VI. the *Archbishop of Canterbury*, and twelve of the other principal *Bishops* and *Divines*, joined in a *committee*, drew up the *form of celebrating the Lord’s Supper*; and, after that, of the rest of the *Common Prayer*; chiefly from the best *primitive formularies of public prayer* they could find; which was soon after confirmed by *authority of Parliament*, with this *testimony* subjoined, viz. that *none could doubt, but that the authors were inspired, and assisted therein, by the Holy Ghost*. At the same time, (as *Nichols*, in his *Defensio Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ*, observes) it was the peculiar happiness of our *Reformation*, that it had been *established* by the concurrent authority of the *Church and State*, so we enjoyed the most perfect agreement and unanimity of all orders of men among us; the very name of those swarms of *sectarists* (the filthy

pollutions whereof have, *since, infected* so far, and wide) being then not so much as heard of in our land. Neither did any one, either at home or abroad, (the envy, ill-nature, and heterodoxy of *Calvin* only excepted) charge us, in the least, with any remains of *Popish* leaven, as mixt with our *services* and *orders*, or any thing that looked that way: but all men honoured our *Church*, as the most *holy mother* of the people of *God* committed to her, as well as the most strenuous opposer of *Antichrist*, and the chief bulwark of the *Reformation*. And so matters continued; not a *dog moving his tongue*, or sowing the least seed of *schism*, or *dissention*, to corrupt her. Till under the persecution in *Queen Mary's* time, when, many flying, (as it was to be expected) into the Protestant States abroad, there settled themselves into little *Chapelries* or *Churches*, by permission of the *magistrates*, according to the order of the *Common Prayer*, and *service of the Church of England*. Only, at *Frankfort*, one *Fox*, a man of a turbulent innovating spirit, with others associated to him, were drawn into fondness for *Calvin's plan* (*schismatical as it was*, from all *Christian Churches since the Apostles*) and made themselves a *new farrago of public prayers*, as opposite to the *English*, and consequently to those
of

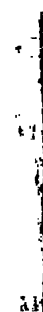
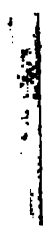
of all the *primitive Churches*, as they could devise: which, upon Queen *Mary's* death, they brought home with them: and, in preaching and writing, endeavoured to *force*, or *palm* upon the people; but yet, without any *direct* and *open schism*: till one *Cartwright*, in a theological disputation held at *Cambridge* before the Queen [*Elizabeth*] being rebuked by her for his unreasonable and turbulent manner of conducting himself in it, thereupon went off, full fraught with *spleen* and *spite*, to *Calvin*: from whence returning, with *new ulcers* added to his *old sores*, and causing fresh disturbances, he was expelled his college, and deprived of the *Margaret Professorship*, by Dr. *Whitgift*, who was head of the same college [*Trinity*] and *Vice Chancellor* of the *University*. Whereupon, with others of his own *Calvinistical cast*, he began to set up his *novo-puritanical schism*, with *classes*, *conventicles*, &c. in avowed contempt and rebellion against the *Church*. The smoking brands of which fire of schism being blown up by the tainted breath of his followers, broke out, in half an age, into a flame that once set three kingdoms into a blaze, brought one of the best of Kings to the *block*, extirpated *episcopacy* and the *peerage*, so as without the visible interposition of Providence, there,

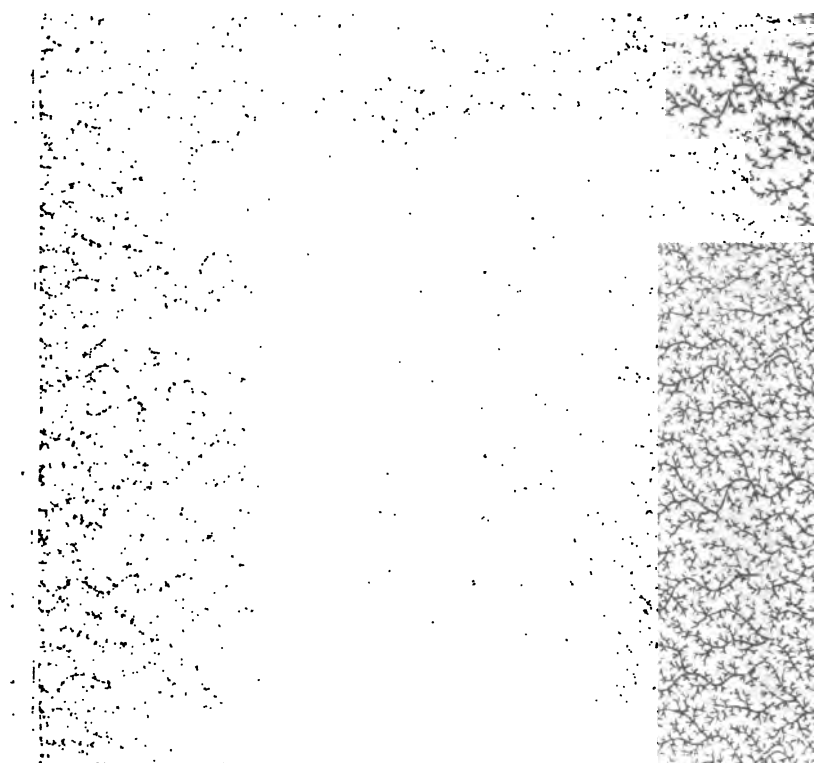
there appeared no more hopes of their restoration for ever. Neither are the *coals* of the *old brands* yet quenched, but they burn still under the embers of *sedition*, wherewith they are raked up, and threaten, yet, new and worse *fires*, perhaps to the *civil*, but certainly to the *religious state* of things among us; which God avert!

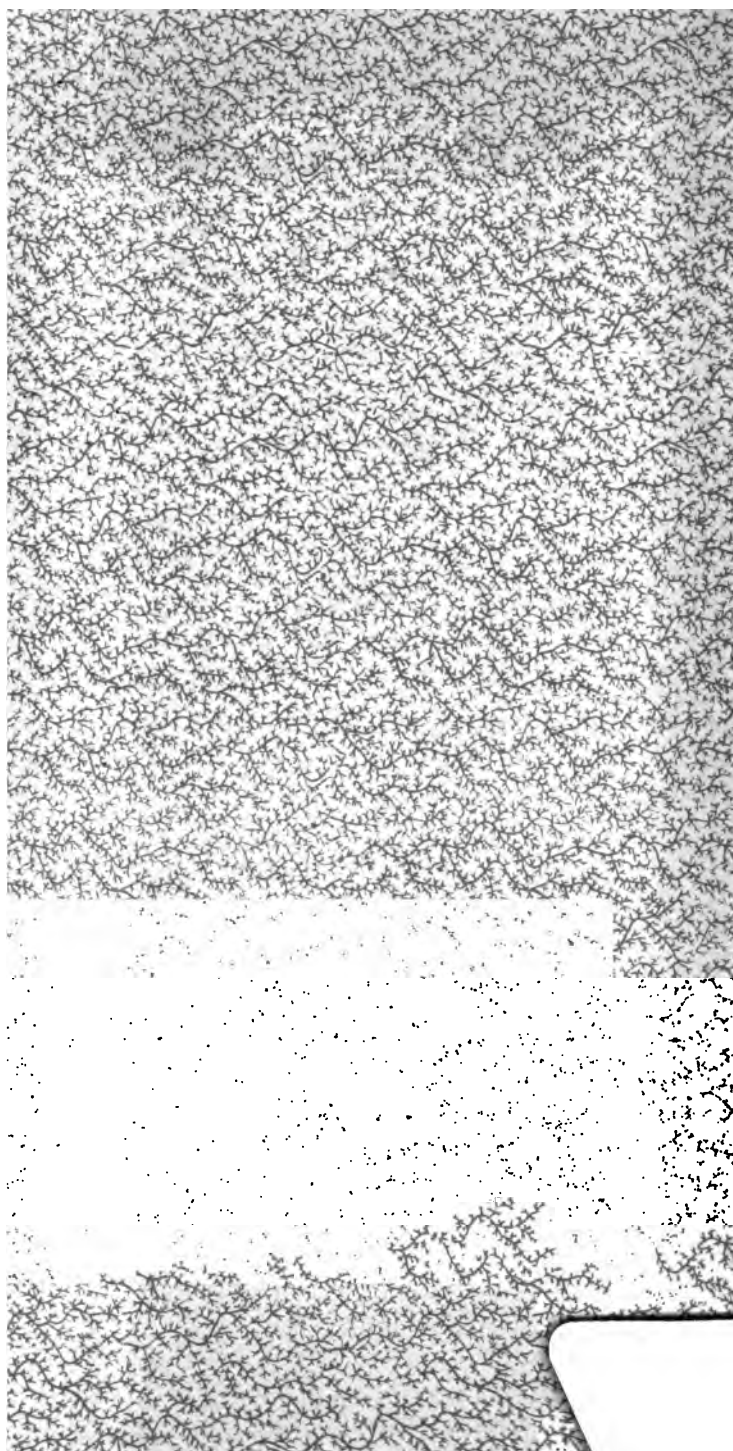
This good man did not live to see the dismembering of the British empire, by the separation of the American colonies, begun and carried on by the same party both here and there, to the loss of so many thousand lives, and the oppressing of the people with new and endless burthens of taxes. So notorious was the case, that even the gentlemen of the army, who had an opportunity of making proper observations, and were properly disposed to make them, brought home this report with them to the mother country, that if the Church of England had but obtained that timely support in the colonies, for which it had so often petitioned, the American rebellion had never happened: and if this government shall be as remiss toward itself, in the mother country, as it has been toward the colonies, the same evils will soon break out at home.

THE END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.









1870-1871
1871-1872
1872-1873

1873-1874

1874-1875

1875-1876
1876-1877